

Connections

October 2019 Issue

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New faces and farewells

KEEP ON CAMPING!

Financial Report

Year in Review

LEAGUE TOURNAMENT 2019



Chairman's Report

with *Mark Stretton*

Q: Hello Mark! What has been happening for the Young Life Board this year?

It has been a great but a tough year. Great in the sense that we have had another year of growth in the organisation. Tough as this has brought growth pains.

With Christianity being questioned in an ever changing world and people struggling to see its relevance it's easy to lose hope and feel a bit defeated. Sometimes I feel we behave like we are guarding God or defending him. But when you sit back and think about it, we need to reflect on who God is and what he has done for us and what he thinks of us.

I recently stumbled across one of my favourite quotes from Jim Rayburn, Young Life's founder (see inset).

I love the part where he says it's a crime to bore anyone with the Gospel. The Christian message when communicated properly is exciting, it's freeing, it's inspirational and full of hope. To be able to communicate this to others, we need to get it ourselves.

The Board has spent a lot of time grappling with the fact that the need is great, with too much to do and not enough time to do it. We have been working with Glyn, Young Life's CEO, to look at how we can increase our capacity to meet current needs and create room for further growth.

Q: Can you tell us more about the changes and what this means for you?

We, (the Board and Glyn) had agreed on the need to restructure some things and we created the position of Manager, Field Operations and Training. I was excited about this and was actively searching my network to find someone. I thought I had found the right individual and even got him to come to Summer Camp. He was excited about Young Life but said he didn't feel called – but he did say to



Mark Stretton is Young Life's new Manager, Field Operations and Training

“Christ is the strongest, grandest, most attractive personality ever to grace the earth. It is a crime to bore anyone with the Gospel!”

— *Jim Rayburn, Young Life Founder*

me, he felt I was the man for the job. I dismissed this but each time I saw him he would say, “Have you applied yet?” Then my wife, Danielle, asked me if I could do anything, what would I do? And I said work for Young Life.

So I asked the Board for permission to apply for the new position and

now I am no longer a Board member. I am the full time Young Life Field Operations manager. I am so excited but nervous at the same time. I think of my favourite verse Jeremiah 29:11 and Jim Rayburn's quote. I am looking forward to seeing what God does.

So this is my last message as Board Chair. Mitchell Broom, who has served on the Young Life Board since 2012 has been appointed as the new Chair and I'd like to thank him and the other Board members for their work and governance for the past seven years.

Thanks again to the staff, volunteers, those who pray and our financial supporters for doing and giving more. We are all part of something special. Remember He (God) is able to do superabundantly more than all we dare ask or think according to his power that is at work within us. (Ephesians 3:20 Amplified).

Let's put our doubts, fears and shortcomings aside and endeavour to be faithful and inspired that God can and will use us to offer hope and inspiration to Australia's young people.

CEO Report 2018-19

with Glyn Henman

I am happy to report that Young Life Australia has seen another year of sustained growth across the organisation in the 2018-19 financial year. This is our 10th year of consecutive growth.

Thank you for standing with us again throughout the year and I am ever mindful of the trust you place in the organisation and our people. No matter your role or level of involvement, it is people who make Young Life Australia great. Thank you to our volunteers, donors, supporters, staff, committees and national board who have all made a significant contribution throughout the year.

This year has been a season change as we have rolled out our strategic plan with an ongoing focus on young people, our people, our processes and our supporters. A lot of work has been invested in our volunteers and staff with an eye to their spiritual health. We have conducted a wellbeing survey among our staff and volunteers with pleasing results around the wellbeing and spiritual health of our people. There is always work to do but we are encouraged.

This year we have farewelled Llew and Barbara Morris from the staff team as our first retirees. Llew has served as Young Life Australia's financial controller for the last 15 years and I am deeply grateful for his friendship, wisdom, encouragement and skill. Barbara has assisted in receipting donations and helping serve our donors. They will be missed very much, and I thank them for their years of service. Heather Gant has also finished up as our Central West regional manager having helped found the Bathurst, Dubbo and Warren areas over the years. We will miss Heather

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But what never
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but wish her well for the future. If there is one constant in life, it is that change constantly happens. But what never changes is God's love for people. Young Life's vision to be positively impacting Australian school-aged young people for Christ with the resultant transformation of

the wider community reflects our desire to be a constant relational presence in a changing world of young people that is experiencing deep disruption.

Thank you for your support and encouragement.

Financial Report 2018-19

with Llew Morris

The 2019 financial year marked another year of steady progress for Young Life Australia, as we worked on further developing and strengthening operations.

It is all the more satisfying that we have been able to deliver a year of strong operational progress along with a solid financial performance. Revenue increased 4% to \$1.8 million, while the surplus for the year was \$10,149, down from \$22,308 the previous year.

Our staff and volunteers operate in 15 local communities in Australia and 2 overseas. Together, they are in contact with more than 5,000 young people each year. At year end, we employed 40 staff including 4 full-time, 32 part-time and 4 casual staff. This equated to 20 FTE positions. Our staff are supported in their work by more than 400 adult volunteers who assist in a range of roles – serving on Committees, leading youth activities, organizing fundraising events, providing suppers, driving buses and cars, flipping pancakes and sausages for breakfasts and sausage sizzles. Our adult volunteers are registered

and have been cleared to work with children through the child protection process in each state and territory.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

2019 was a year of consolidation and building depth in our operations. Our two newest locations, Guyra and Warren both in country NSW, worked hard to expand their presence in their local communities. In other locations, there were many stories of new and innovative ways in which our staff and volunteers reach out to teenagers to bring them into contact with trained adults who mentor and encourage them in their faith journey. Elsewhere, some outcomes were particularly noteworthy: Ryde brought an amazing 42 campers and 19 leaders to the summer camp in Jindabyne in January – the biggest individual area numbers ever. Ryde, Barossa and Canberra all grew their donations by more than 20% year-on-year. In fundraising Barossa more than

quadrupled their fundraising results while Parramatta, Hobart, Monash and Canberra more than doubled theirs.

Overseas, the operations in Belarus, Lithuania and Macedonia went from strength to strength with Macedonia running their first ever summer camp.

In a very exciting strategic move, the Board has approved the appointment of a new National Manager of Field Operations & Training to guide and encourage all areas in their growth.

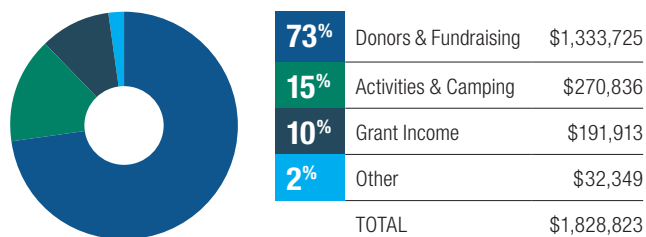
The School Chaplaincy Program continued for the twelfth year. During the year we gained accreditation to deliver the new NSW student wellbeing support program and we gained re-accreditation to deliver school chaplaincy in Queensland. Our 13 chaplains and student wellbeing officers now work in 14 secondary and primary schools around Australia, in Queensland, NSW, ACT and Victoria. Funding for these roles comes primarily from the National School Chaplaincy Program with additional support from private donations and the schools themselves.

INCOME

Income from Donations and Fundraising totalled \$1,333,725. This is the largest component of income representing 73% of income and is the result of the fundraising efforts and activities in the local communities in which Young Life operates. This category grew by 4% in the year.

Income from youth activities including camping, totalled \$270,836 which represents 14% of income.

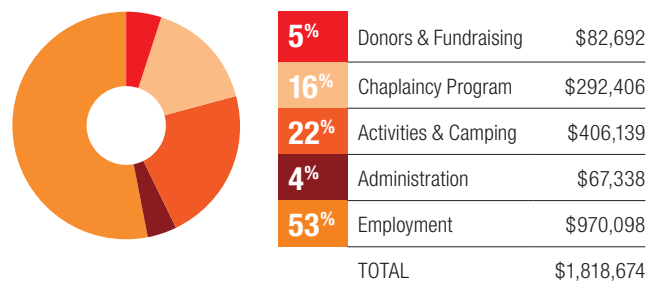
Grant income (including grants to fund chaplains in schools) totalled \$191,913 which represents 10% of income.



EXPENSES

Employment Expenses of \$970,098 make up 53% of Young Life's expenses. This category increased from the previous year with a number of new staff joining and successful fundraising to increase hours.

Young Life continued to achieve operational efficiencies and ranks highly on standard efficiency measures for charities. Less than 5 cents of each dollar of Total Income is spent on Fundraising and less than 4 cents in the dollar is spent on Administration.



To see the full audited financial report you can go to our website and click on the Annual Report tab or search the ACNC website under Find a Registered Charity.

Canberra branching out

"After an amazing year in 2018 of holding Club in Hawker on a fortnightly basis, the Club kids begged us to go weekly," said Alex Lee, Young Life's Area Manager for Canberra.

"By the second school term in 2019 we were there.

"Spending three hours every week, hanging out, playing games, sharing Jesus and hanging out some more has lifted the relationships we have with the youth.

"Club has grown in number and our bible group has grown," shared Alex, "which means we need more volunteers.

"It's not about having people to run programs or attend camps.

"It's really about gathering a team of people who are willing to share the everyday lives of young people as a way of offering the love and hope of Jesus.

"It's relationships that reveal the reality of Jesus."

The Canberra area has grown up around a Breakfast Club outreach at Belconnen High through the combined efforts of Young Life's Chaplain in the school and volunteers from Christ Church Hawker.

"The hospitality shown by Christ Church Hawker in supporting the breakfast and hosting Club, has opened the path for 35 young people who have come along to Young Life Club this year.

"We would love to see similar partnerships emerge with the churches in Gunghalin where we would like to open a new club in the coming year."



Bec (left), a Young Life Junior Leader from Hawker College and Dharma, Year 9 at Belconnen High.



Sharing with youth in Skopje

Hello, it's Brooke Filipovski here, based in Skopje Macedonia.

This past year, Young Life Skopje has really become established. Clubs were run twice a month throughout the fall and spring, as well as regular Bible studies and contact with students.

Capernaum clubs, working with special needs students at a specialised school, also began this past year.

Our biggest milestone was having our first Macedonia/Bulgaria camp happen in Macedonia in Krushevo in July. In total there were 70 campers

and leaders, 44 from a few parts of Macedonia and 18 from Pernik, Bulgaria. God was so faithful to pull together a volunteer team from over eight nations and around Macedonia to serve these students and over 30 Macedonian Bibles were taken by campers eager to learn more about Jesus.

Since camp the momentum hasn't stopped with regular contact work, events like hiking trips and excursions to the water park have taken place and bible studies have started up again.

70 campers and leaders attended Young Life Macedonia's first Summer Camp.

Our third round of new leader training has begun, and it is exciting that three of the new leaders are our students who have been involved since the beginning and want to be trained to help reach their peers.

We also hope to see a second club begin in Skopje this year, a more regular Capernaum club and to train leaders in Strumica to begin club in this city, about an hour and a half away from Skopje.

OUR YOUTH



Young Life Club in Ryde.

“Young people want to know how God relates to them personally, how He speaks to them, whether He is present in family situations and what He can do to change things.

They aren’t as questioning of His existence as they are of His personal connection to them.

I just find we rarely come across kids who don’t want to talk about God – they’re always keen to know more.”

Holly Lim, Young Life in Ryde

Bringing home the Good News

Hello, my name is Gjorgi and I am a university student in Skopje, Macedonia. A few years ago, I came to know Jesus through Young Life and so, when I moved here, I was keen to be involved.

At university I am studying Political Science, and this is what a professor said to me and a group of my peers recently: “I wish you a great future and that in three years you continue your Master studies outside of the country”. That was my plan, like all young

people in Macedonia the plan is to leave because the work opportunities are so limited.

However, seeing God at work this past year has changed everything for me. I have been through new leader

“The opportunities with Young Life have changed the way I think about the future.”



Gjorgi (left) and his cabin at Macedonia’s Summer Camp in 2019.

training and served as a camp intern through Young Life’s Central Eastern European region over the summer. Now I am considering returning to my home town. The opportunities with Young Life have changed the way I think about the future.

I have been thinking about where I came from and my last six years. I’m just a kid from a little village called Zubovo who started playing basketball and got the chance to go to a Young Life camp.

Not everyone in my village (or other villages in the country) gets this kind of chance. I’m a rare exception. I got this chance because there were two pastors who ran a basketball ministry in town, five minutes from Zubovo and I happened to start playing basketball. That is what I want to do with my life. I want to go back and start a Young Life club and basketball ministry in or close to my village so another kid like me, can go to their first camp and have the chance that I have had.

Instead of going somewhere else to get a better education and earn a more important degree in Political Science, I want to get to know God more and make Him known in Skopje, Strumica and Zubovo in my country. That’s what really matters, and nothing is more important than that.



Learning from one another

Young Life teams from the southern states gathered in Victoria.

In the beautiful bush setting that is Halls Gap, Victoria, Young Life's staff and volunteers from the southern states met for a team retreat.

The goal was to give members, who are separated by vast distances, the chance to feel part of a bigger, wider Young Life community.

Liz Merritt has spent the last two years, working on regional development in Melbourne. She helped coordinate the retreat and shape the training program.

"Our big focus was on fun and bonding together. Each Young Life team has new-comers so we jumped right into practicing and performing club skits," explained Liz.

"Workshopping how to be funny as well as appropriate led into subjects such as discipling and contact work and other ways we are role models in our interactions with youth.

"We explored why Christians do ministry, why it is we personally do

ministry and why we do Young Life in particular. It helped to reflect on these things.

"Bill Loy, from Young Life in Florida led a session on spiritual health which was followed by a hike into the surrounding country," said Liz.

"Getting input, going deeper and sharing what we have in common, as well as each person's unique perspective: I felt refreshed," said Liz.



Meera joins Young Life Australia as Financial Controller.

Introducing Meera

Meera Seemampillai is the new face at Young Life's national office. She has joined as Financial Controller after serving at Generate Ministries, a provider of SRE teachers and school chaplains in New South Wales, as head of their finance department. Previously, Meera has had a varied career, working in rugby league, insurance and reinsurance, commercial legal and commercial real estate.

"I am excited to serve in this ministry, for the opportunity it offers teens to embrace the hope and purpose offered in Jesus Christ. It is on my heart to see all young people regardless of their background, encounter Jesus," says Meera.

Meera is married to Anthony, has twin boys and is actively involved at St Stephen's Anglican Church in Normanhurst.



Neil Walford is serving and mentoring the Armadale team.

Introducing Neil

Young Life welcomes Neil Walford, to the team in Armadale.

"Since arriving in February, I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting new people; building relationships and team; and slowly creating some much-needed momentum.

"I love the Young Life model and believe that we have a crucial role to play in the lives of young people and the future of the church in our region," says Neil.

"I have also discovered we have some special church partnerships and have shared at 10 churches in the last few months.

"We are continuing to build our volunteer and donor base and it has been great to see new people serving and giving this year.

"We have some amazing volunteers and leaders who astound me with their commitment and faithfulness. They are the heroes of our work."

OUR SUPPORTERS

Creating strong committees

Young Life Committees are the hub of local support and structure for Young Life's work in communities and in September they gathered, for a bi-annual Summit held in Sydney.

"Committees help to keep the long-term vision for young people alive," says Fudge Jordan, who chairs the Hobart Committee.

"Before there is a Young Life Club, there is a local committee forming, planning and praying," says Fudge.

"The aim of the Summit was to help the committee members stay inspired by exchanging ideas and sharing experiences."

Committees met at the 2019 Summit in September.

Meet Marty and Jenny from Hobart

Hi, we are Jenny and Marty and we're on the committee from Young Life in Hobart.



Jenny: "Why do we love being part of Young Life? Because it's for kids and the future."

Marty: "Having been involved in Club and the programs and Camp, I have seen the changes that come over young people.

I've seen young kids, teenagers come off the street and they're broken, and they've got no one to love them and when they are met with love from

the Young Life leaders and mentors, the change that comes over their lives is often dramatic. And that's what I love, seeing that change." Jenny: "How can people in Hobart support what Young Life is doing? By becoming donors. We would love to see more donors. Join the committee. We need more people involved. We've got really passionate people involved but we need more financial support. Lots of people giving a little would mean so much."



Meet Dave from Canberra

Hi, I'm Dave and I'm on the Young Life committee in Canberra.

"Our vision for Canberra in the long term is to see hundreds of volunteer leaders involved in every school in Canberra. As someone involved on a Young Life committee, I'd love more locals to be involved in seeing ministry happen in their backyards and Young Life is a really good ministry model for reaching out to kids beyond the church and sharing Jesus in a relatable way."

KEEP ON CAMPING!

Young Life's camping ministry is growing. "Camping has never been more important to Young Life's effectiveness and reach," says Glyn Henman.

"Our year begins and ends with Summer Camp but that's the tip of the iceberg."

"During the year we have Wyld Life Camp, HSC Study Camp, two leadership retreats, the Young Life Summit for Committee members and overnight Club activities in Armidale, Barossa Valley and Warren."

"Young Life in Hobart also run D'Cypher Camp and Spring Camp in partnership with other organisations."

"Our main reason for this investment is the real and deep value camping offers youth," says Glyn.

"Research has found what we know based on experience; students regard camps and retreats as often having great significance for how they think about life¹."

"More so even than religious education or social justice programs."

"Young people appreciate getting out of the daily stream of activities and thinking in a more focussed way about the issues of life," says Glyn.



"But camps work on many levels."

"As an organisation made up of Christian volunteers camp is where we see the most diverse group of people coming together to work as a team."

"And because camps offer a front row seat into what God is doing in young lives, our camp volunteers go home enthused to keep sharing God's love with young people," says Glyn.

In the past three years, Young Life in Ryde has witnessed the ripple effect of camping.

"Without a doubt, Summer Camp has been used powerfully to shape what is happening in the Ryde area," says Glyn.

"Last year the Ryde community raised 50 sponsorships for Summer Camp, enabling us to support community kids from non-churched backgrounds who – without financial assistance – would not be able to come."

"All due to the generosity of people in the local churches."

"The Club has grown in size because the relationships are being encouraged through a deep investment by this team who have climbed mountains with these kids."

"It's happening right across the mission."



The volunteers who make up Summer Staff will be onsite at Summer Camp 2020 from January 11–18. Join the team at younglife.org.au/campchamp

¹ Hughes P, Reid S: How Australian Young People Experience God and the Influences on Their Thinking – A Review of Secondary Research and Literature Study (June 2019)



Farewell to Llew and Barbara Morris

*This month, we are farewelling
Llew and Barbara Morris –
Young Life Australia's first retirees.*



Llew has served as Young Life's Financial Controller and Operations Manager for 15 years and Barbara for just about as long, in the area of finance administration.

As well as being on staff, they have given countless hours voluntarily, shared their home with all manner of visiting Young Lifers and generously helped many Young Life areas become established and grow.

We have spent time telling Llew and Barbara what they mean to us but here, we want to share something of their story before, during and after Young Life (which hasn't ended by the way – more on that later).

When Llew first joined Young Life in 2004, he had come to the end of a chapter of his career in banking.

What were you doing before you came to Young Life? What shaped you?

I was working for the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and about halfway through my career with the bank, I was given leave to take a position with the Tonga Development Bank as the Deputy Managing Director.

Our boys were young, and it was a special time in our life as a family to be living in Nuku'alofa. It was a caring and loving community. Barbara is a trained teacher and so she set up a preschool. I was involved in setting up a savings program for the island communities. It was a very responsible job to have in my 30s and very rewarding. I was able to set up the first micro-lending scheme in the Pacific.

We spent four years in Tonga and when we returned to the Commonwealth Bank I continued to be involved in the bank's Asia-Pacific operations. Our next post was to Indonesia as Country Head, tasked with setting up a new retail bank which meant lots of travel around Indonesia and neighbouring countries.

How did you come across Young Life? What have you enjoyed?

In 2004 I had finished up with the bank and was reading the local newspaper. There was a one-inch job ad for a financial controller with a Christian charity three days a week. It turned out I knew Glyn Henman through church where Young Life

Ryde was meeting. When I started, there were seven staff and turnover of \$350,000 per year. Now there are 40 staff and turnover close to \$1.8 million. What I have loved most about the role is helping young workers who arrive in our organisation learn about finance and acquire new skills. Being relevant and at the centre of an organisation that is evolving and developing has been great and being able to help establish a well-functioning board and committees has been very rewarding.

What does the future hold for you and for Young Life?

For Young Life I can see there is an opportunity for others to spread their wings and bring new ideas which will help the organisation take the next step. For me, I feel happy with what has been achieved and ready to hand it on. I am looking forward to having more spare time to spend with Barbara, our sons and for travel. I might also do some consulting and the Young Life board has just appointed me as Board Secretary and Advisor on Governance and Compliance, so I look forward to remaining involved in this way.

Farewell and thank you Heather Gant

In September, Young Life Australia farewelled one of our longest serving members, Heather Gant as a result of changes to our organisational structure.

"I am very grateful for Heather and the way she has helped shape Young Life as a mission," said Glyn Henman.

"Heather was appointed as Young Life's Central West NSW Regional Manager in 2016 having pioneered Young Life in Bathurst 12 years ago. She has been the face of the mission and has shared with so many, the urgent need for adult volunteers to go among young people, sharing and relating their lives and their love for Jesus.

"She has served the youth with energy, compassion and faithfulness; helped to establish Young Life in Warren and Dubbo and carried the vision for outreach to communities such as Brewarrina and Condobolin.

"She has been instrumental in developing a hub for Young Life resources online which has helped to train and equip teams all over Australia," he said.

Heather has been surrounded by a committed group of volunteers and a team she has mentored and trained over the years, some of whom began as Club kids. They have brought hundreds of youth to camps and provided Young Life and Wyld Life Clubs where youth are welcomed, accepted and loved.

"I know many will be very sad at her leaving. Heather has planted and watered the vision of a bright future for young people in Bathurst and Central West NSW and I pray Young Life will continue to be a blessing to young people and a safe place where young people can come in their search for truth, hope and life," said Glyn.



WHAT'S ON...

October 18–19

Wyld Life Holiday Sleepover, Barossa

November 23

Christmas Canapes with
Sydney Supporters

January 12–18

Young Life Summer Camp

Response Form

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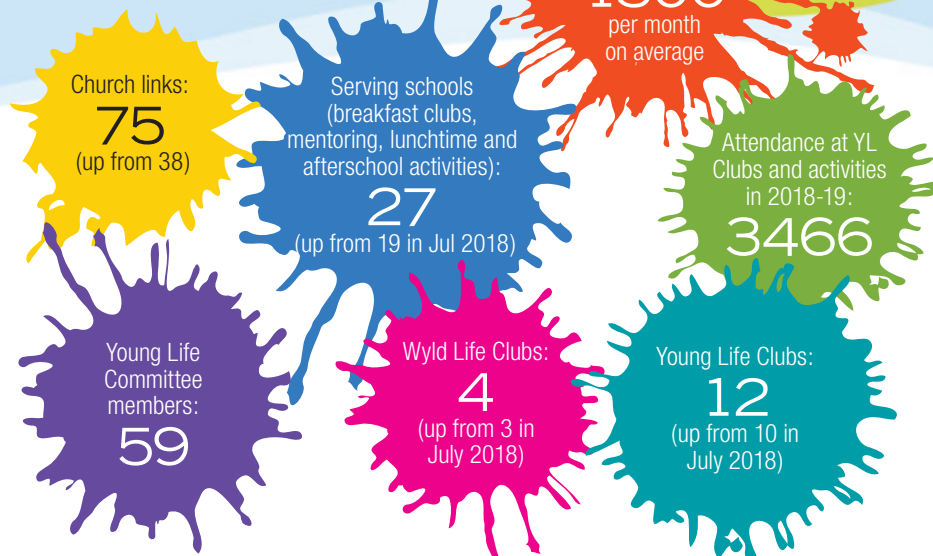
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YLA STATISTICS



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