

# Connections

February 2021 Issue

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## CEO's update with Glyn Henman

**2**021 is off to a cracking start for Young Life Australia, although a little different from previous years. There was no national Summer Camp due to COVID-19, but we did not sit by and wait for the year to start. Instead, we ran a range of fantastic state-based camp and holiday activities in South Australia, Queensland and NSW/ACT. We have seen 90 young people and 58 volunteers from around the country have a great Young Life experience over the summer break. I am grateful to all the staff and volunteers who dared to dream for their young friends and found ways to not only have a great time, but share the hope we have in Jesus in these strangest of days.

As we move into the first half of the year, we are looking forward to getting all things Young Life started again. Gathering our volunteer teams and training them for successful ministry is key in the coming weeks. We then look forward to re-launching our work with young people in the community and in schools (where possible), doing what we call contact work. Meeting with young people in their world is the first step to making a difference.

Coming out of one of the most difficult years in recent global history, we will need your support like never before as young people continue to struggle to adjust to new ways of doing life.

I am more convinced of the need for Young Life to be present in our communities. Young people are longing to re-form significant relationships and share life together again. Thank you for making the journey with us.

## What's on

Feb 27 Monash @ Melbourne Cable Park

Feb 28 Dubbo Camp Stories

**Details coming soon**

May Young Life Barossa turns 10

May Young Life Banquet



**"I** cannot even begin to describe how fun and memorable Summer Camp was!", Layla shared.

"I did feel anxious about going on camp, however when I arrived I felt so welcome and as if I were with my second family."

"Picking just one highlight from camp is impossible, but one was definitely the aquatic activities: water-skiing and knee-boarding! My favourite was probably the knee-boarding. It was so much fun, and the aquatic instructors were lovely. The leaders also joined in and it was exciting watching and cheering each other on."

"I also went kayaking on the lake with some friends which was lovely after I finally got rid of the earwig in my kayak. When we kayaked back, I had to look twice at the giant inflatable duck floating around in the water!"

"We had free time each day where we could choose what to do. I decided to design a t-shirt. On the back, I wrote a verse from the song, Reckless Love in fabric paints and had everyone on camp sign it. It was a great opportunity for me to get to know everyone and now I have a unique and meaningful keepsake to remind me of Summer Camp!"

"Other highlights were the nerf gun war and messy games, the yoghurt challenge and jelly twister. We also ran a relay wearing gumboots filled with mashed up oranges. It was disgusting!"

Layla Grosser is a Year 10 student from the Barossa Valley. In January she joined others at Young Life's SA Summer Camp near Lake Bonney.

"We had Club every night which began with a detective skit by leaders Lauren and Byron and some detective games. It was lots of fun and the skits were very amusing. Club ended with a talk by Andrew about God and His love for

us – the talks Andrew gave were extremely meaningful and gave me a different perspective of how great God's love truly is.

"On the last night after Club, we had time for a solo reflection where we found a space of our own to reflect. I was by the lake watching the sunset. I felt like I could stay there forever listening to the calming sounds of the waves crashing beneath my feet. It was such an incredible and peaceful experience."

"On the last night of camp, we also got a little dressed up. The tables were covered in table cloths and decorated with some gum leaf table ornaments and candles. I helped test out the photo booth. By test out, I mean pull interesting poses with two of the leaders, Charles, and Lauren."

"The sunset on the last night was probably the most beautiful and we had a group photo together outside after dinner."

"If you are still not sure about going on camp by yourself, invite some friends and spread the word! Everyone is very welcoming. My advice is to have fun, live in the moment, and know that you can always talk to the leaders. They are kind, wonderful and understanding people

and are there to have fun with you, grow friendships with you and help you to grow your relationship with God.

"Summer Camp is so much fun, and everyone is welcome. You will not regret going!"





# COVID-19 ~~WE INTERRUPT THIS PROGRAM~~ FOR AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

**AGITATED AND RESTRICTED. THIS WAS THE FEELING COMING FROM A GROUP OF TEENAGE BOYS AFTER A YEAR UNDER LOCK-DOWN OR THE THREAT OF LOCKDOWN.**



**SUMMER STATS:**  
**3 CAMPS**  
**90 YOUTH**  
**58 VOLUNTEERS**

Join us at camp in  
2022 as we celebrate  
50 years of Young Life  
in Australia!

**January 16-22, 2022**

**"I** could see they needed to let loose a bit," says Charles, one of the volunteers at Young Life's summer camp in South Australia.

"I could so clearly see the need in these guys for good male mentorship to give them the space to let loose and for it to be safe." "Camp gave them that space."

Tracking the effect of the past year and the pressures felt by young people, has many experts concerned.

Maggie Dent is a well-known author and educator on parenting teens. She surveyed boys age 12-18 years observing significant concern about the future. "Many boys expressed serious worries about climate change, political unrest, increasing violence, an inability to buy their own home and increased mental health challenges – and that was pre-COVID-19," she writes in *The Guardian*<sup>1</sup>.

Add to this, the pandemic's impact which "removed many of the protective factors in their lives last year – extracurricular activities, sport, the arts, rituals like school camps and formals, and being locked away from friends and peers – many are struggling overtly or silently."

It was this sense, of youth needing something to look forward to, that motivated Young Life Australia to move quickly when it appeared restrictions were easing.

"After missing out in January 2020 due to bushfires we had to show the young people we work with that they are worth planning a camp for, even if we had some uncertainty due to the rapidly changing COVID situation," says Ben Hura, co-Director of the NSW-ACT Camp. "Trying was more important than not trying at all."

Sophie Wilksch, Young Life's SA Camp Director adds, "we wanted to give our teens something to smile and laugh about; but the real effect I saw was these teens showing confidence, getting out on the skis and kneeboard, willing to give it go after year of low-confidence and genuine struggle".

"I'm so glad we gave them that opportunity."

Nathan Wilson, of Young Life in QLD, ran a day camp program in the Redlands for 40 teens and was almost shut down by a city-wide lockdown the weekend before. The day went ahead – a shortened program outdoors.

"It was very much worth it. It really impressed on the Young Life staff and volunteers – how much value there is in sharing these activities with youth. The high engagement from teens wanting to have fun together and their interest in us as adults when we shared with them who Jesus is and







what He means to us.”

Psychologists identify certain things teens need in their lives: having a sense of autonomy and control; feeling they are able to do something well – competence; and knowing that they have significant people in their lives to support them.

“We saw this happening before our eyes,” says Lauren Mace from Barossa Valley Young Life. “The campers felt trusted to be their own person. They changed from their parents doing all the talking at drop-off to talking themselves, sharing their ideas. They could work out who they are and discover their independence.”

“Young people are worried about the world, they are impacted by events as well as circumstances at home; and they are taking in all the evidence around them, including what drives us – the adults they know,” says Karla Stait who gave the talks at NSW-ACT Camp.

“They are told you have to do something to get something. You have to earn your way. You have to work to get rich. So I wanted to share how incredibly loved they are by God, right now and since the beginning of time – just for who they are.”

Photo credits: Mel Pocknall, Juhan Klooster and Lauren Mace.

‘The post-high school hole: how to help school leavers in a time of transition, by Maggie Dent, appeared in The Guardian, Jan 24, 2021



## WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT SUMMER CAMP?

Callum Dowling, volunteer with Young Life Armidale

**H**aving a really clear and present opportunity to live out the gospel... it's a chance to show kids the gospel in action as well as in word.

### What were the campers like?

There was one boy – he was willing to get up and leave if he didn't like what was going on. He basically had an adult with him all the time. At all times throughout camp there was a positive Christian male influence – kind, patient, self-sacrificial – there to be with him.

“Keep it up Young Life. I know it's a hard slog. It's making a difference in these kids' lives.”



### How did you enjoy being a volunteer with Young Life?

It was interesting – working with a new group of people. It was well organised. I could plug in and go.

### Why did you do it?

I want young people come to Jesus... it's what we all want and why we're involved in Young Life. Young Life is out there casting a deeper and wider net in places others might not think to go.

To donate visit  
[www.younglife.org.au/donate](http://www.younglife.org.au/donate)

## My response

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Day) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

### Please send me more information on:

- ☐ Becoming a monthly giving partner  
☐ Volunteers in Schools  
☐ Serving on a local YLA Committee  
☐ Sponsor a teen to Summer Camp  
☐ Praying for the work of Young Life Australia

### I wish to partner the work of Young Life Australia through financial support:

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick the applicable boxes:

- ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ One-off  
☐ Cheque ☐ Direct Debit  
(We will contact you for details)

Credit card type:

- ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex

Name on card \_\_\_\_\_

CARD NO.

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Expiry Date 

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

### We appreciate your support. It really makes a difference!

Please send completed form to:

Young Life Australia  
PO Box 240, West Ryde, NSW 1685

Please make all cheques payable to Young Life.

Young Life Australia complies with all provisions of the Privacy Act. Be assured that the personal details you provide will be entered directly into the Young Life Australia database and will not be disclosed to any third party. We may use your details to send you information about the work of Young Life Australia. If you would like to know what information Young Life Australia has on you please call (02) 9877 5144 during business hours.

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# POSTCARDS from lockdown

## Brooke Filipovski, Young Life in Skopje

### One word to describe 2020: Gratitude

I am grateful to see young adult leaders in my team who are persisting in Christ despite significant challenges this past year. One was forced to be outside of Macedonia in her native Czech Republic for five months when borders closed. Two others faced hardships: ranging from depression and failure due to the challenge of online education, to anxiety and fear of living alone. All three leaned into Christ and met together even more regularly on Zoom. I saw them continue to pursue teenagers and embrace the switch to online clubs when everything seemed so draining. I feel the Lord has given us the opportunity to really focus on building a strong foundation for sustainable ministry here in our nation.

**One reason to persist:** I persist in hope because Jesus is the way, the truth and the life – young people need this anchor of hope in their lives to help them navigate whatever storms come in their life. He is the only hope that will last.

## Mark Hamilton, Young Life in Belarus & the Baltics

### One word to describe 2020: Challenging

I am so grateful for our team – they have done an outstanding job adjusting to the impact COVID-19 has had on Young Life's relationship-style ministry. One stand-out is Dana from Vilnius, Lithuania. She had the challenge of moving everything we do to an online format. Each week she does online contact work with teen skeptics and atheists, organises an online club for them – delivers great gospel talks, and comes up with interesting challenges to engage the teens. The changes haven't been easy, but she has made it all easier – we are so thankful she is on our team.

### One reason to persist:

Governments around the world put the church and workers like Young Life staff and volunteers into the category of "non-essential workers". As this pandemic drags on, we are seeing the side-effects of this. Add on social-distancing, isolation, and the increase in screen-time, and we are seeing youth more depressed, fatigued, and hopeless than I can remember. Whether teens know it or not, they need to be a part of something that is bigger than them and these circumstances. That someone is Jesus – his love for them and desire to be with them. God wants us to live life abundantly and my hope is we'll communicate and demonstrate this well to teens in this part of the world. This is the truth that drives me.

Whether teens know it or not, they need to be a part of something that is bigger than them and these circumstances.



Christmas Day with Brooke, and her youngest children in their home-town square.



Mark and Lera Hamilton and their children.



**Young Life comes  
alongside young  
people to walk their  
journey with them.**

**Connecting in their world**  
Offering support and role-modelling

**Making a difference**  
Instilling confidence and values

**Building resilience**  
Empowering and equipping to  
navigate the challenges ahead



## Our Mission Statement

Young Life seeks to build confidence, values and resilience in Australia's young people through significant relationships with adults who model the love of Jesus Christ.

## Every child is known, valued and cared for

### CHAPLAINCY CORNER with Claire Wood

A Principal mentioned to me once, that schools today have been put in the position of not only educating children, but raising them on matters of life, health, sex, wellbeing, communication – everything a community or village use to provide.

This became all the more apparent when COVID-19 struck and students and families were suddenly cut off from the framework provided by school life.

As the pandemic closed down schools around the nation; and when restrictions were eventually lifted, Young Life's chaplains found themselves helping students make the adjustments.

A primary teacher shared, "students were much more anxious and emotional coming back to school. I felt like I was tip-toeing".

Young Life chaplains could be a filter or a sounding board for students who didn't quite make it to the



Photo: Juhan Klooster

counsellor, but needed an ear to listen or someone to sit with them.

A few of Young Life's chaplains ran breakfast programs and/or social skills programs to help the students mix.

Others met one-to-one with students and families who needed emotional support. This proved highly valuable as schooling returned to 'normal'.

Getting students involved in giving back by preparing and serving coffee and morning tea to the teachers was another way of helping students feel they had the power to do something positive and could make a contribution.

As Viv Cleaver, Young Life's Chaplain at Tottenham Central School said, "It's amazing the conversations that can happen over a hot chocolate!"

**LEARN MORE** [younglife.org.au/chaplaincy](http://younglife.org.au/chaplaincy)

## JOIN THE TEAM

### WE'RE SEARCHING FOR CHRISTIANS, EAGER TO SERVE GOD IN THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITY!

Are you a person who enjoys being around young people? Can you imagine learning their names, inviting them to activities, listening to them and offering encouragement?

Then you need to discover more about Young Life Australia's mission to introduce local teenagers to Jesus, and how you can play a part!

Receive training. Work toward a common goal. Grow in your own faith. Make a difference in the lives of young people.

### VISIT OUR WEBSITE TODAY!

Make contact with the Young Life team, learn about specific opportunities and how volunteering will expand your world!

**YOUNGLIFE.ORG.AU/VOLUNTEER**

P 1300 557 647

E [volunteer@younglife.org.au](mailto:volunteer@younglife.org.au)

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