

# Connections

The latest from Young Life Australia

Autumn 2022

Celebrating

 **50** yrs

**‘Behold! I am doing a new thing’** Isaiah 43:19

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Australia



A message from our CEO

# Winds of change upon Young Life

Welcome to the refreshed edition of the Connections Newsletter. It is my pleasure to introduce this young and vibrant issue to you, as I happily welcome ‘The New’ upon my imminent farewell at the end of April.

One thing I know to be constant in life is change, and now is that time. After thirty one years of employment and five as a volunteer, I have decided to resign as Young Life Australia’s CEO.

I have spent most of my adult life working with and on behalf of young people. It has been a tremendous honour and privilege to lead Young Life Australia, to see new ministries birthed and established, and be part of a team reaching young people for Christ. To build on the vision and be a part of an organisation which takes seriously the founding commitment to introduce young people to Jesus Christ has been transformational.

I want to thank Young Life’s talented, compassionate, and committed staff and volunteers, past and present, for their tireless work, and for the positive impact they have on Australian young people. I have loved my time with Young Life Australia and finish with a deep sense of gratitude for those who continue to dream



for young people. I believe now is the right time to hand over this important work to the next generation of leadership. Please pray for the board as they lead the process of a national search to identify our next CEO.

**As Young Life celebrates its 50th year of formal ministry in Australia, I am more convinced than ever that young people need a clear introduction to the person of Jesus Christ from an adult they know and trust.**

With two years of a global pandemic and a developing war in Ukraine, young people need the assurance and hope that only Jesus Christ can offer. Though my formal role may be concluding, I remain committed to doing all I can to keep supporting Young Life Australia. The search for the new CEO has startted. The future is bright: behold, The Lord is doing a new thing and the harvest is plentiful! Please continue to stand with Young Life. Pray, serve and give.

Warm regards,  
Glyn

## Pray with us:

- For wisdom in the appointment of the new CEO
- For blessing on Glyn, Anne, Madi and Laura
- For courage and creativity in the year ahead
- For revival among young people in our nation
- For clubs to be reignited across Australia
- For more workers for the harvest

Young Life Australia turns 50

# Half a century and still young!

As we celebrate our 50th birthday, we remember the remarkable Young Life Australia pioneers Arthur (Art) Ongley and Daryl Redford.

Young Life was founded in 1941 when Jim Rayburn had a desire to reach out to disinterested teenagers by entering their world.

Some years later, on the other side of the world, Art and his wife, Denise, caught the vision after an American basketball team of high schoolers arrived in Australia in 1972. The mission mandate, “as the Father sent me, so I am sending you,” resonated with them as did the idea of ministry to young people.

Art and Denise led the New South Wales chapter of Young Life from 1973 to 1994. Art says, ‘the days were abundant and fulfilling, and their community of Christians experienced a great richness in being together. In 1973, Young Life sprang up in Victoria when US trained Young Life worker Cliff Johnson moved to Rosebud, Victoria on an international teaching fellowship.

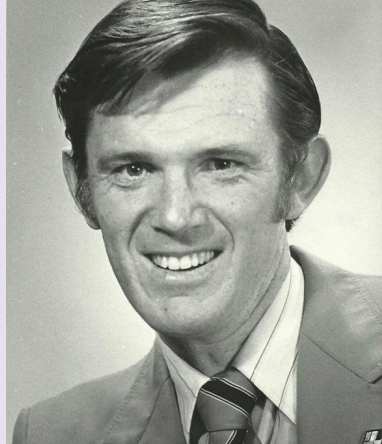
Daryl Redford – the first Victorian paid staff worker – recounts his first Young Life camp: ‘It was at a very old guest house in Marysville Victoria, so the setting was magic, but the thing that stirred us was the vast number of high school kids there who were not from any church.’

Daryl along with his wife Robyn, led the Victorian Young Life from 1973 to 1998. The key to their growth was hosting leaders and kids in their own homes—along with training volunteers and building contacts with local schools.

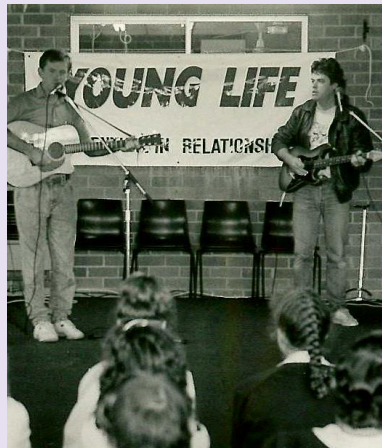
Daryl remembers floating down the Snowy River with a bunch of kids on truck tubes, followed by a night in a shearing shed loaned to them by a local farmer.

‘It was cold but a unique setting for the club and the message of the cross.’

Even though society has changed, both Art and Daryl believe kids still desperately need Young Life’s ministry today. “Young Life is as relevant today because there are just as many kids who need Jesus,” says Daryl.



Art Ongley



Art and Steve Henderson



Daryl Redford



Glyn Henman



Summer Camp 2022

## Five wonderful days of fellowship

Summer camp has always been a highlight in the calendar of Young Life. Even though COVID took –once again– the opportunity for a National camp, we went ahead with some local and day camps. These were certainly different, not to mention smaller, but God had great ideas, they were the perfect fit for the young people who came.

Young Life Parramatta Area Manager Ben Hura says ‘campers and volunteers had a great time, and after a year’s hiatus, it was wonderful to get the ‘volunteer family’ back together again for those wonderful five days of fellowship at Wiseman’s Ferry.’

For first-time volunteer Red Roy Magallanes, this summer camp was an especially amazing experience as two campers made a decision for Christ.

“One of the boys wanted to look at the evidence of God, in a scientific way,” Red says.



Summer camp at Wiseman’s ferry, NSW

“When we got to the final night he learned that God is a personal God and it’s not just about ticking boxes or doing the right things. I think that was the shift for him.”

Young Life Armidale Area Manager Mary Lou Doe related an incident that happened on the bus home:

A boy and a girl sitting behind her began crying. “We asked what was wrong and they both said they didn’t want to leave camp. The girl said that she didn’t expect to make friends, much less such good friends. I miss everyone already,” the girl said. “I want to go back.”

Mary Lou said this happened the entire way home, on a seven-hour journey.



Gaining traction in Macquarie Uni

## University ministry ramping up in NSW

Natural disasters, COVID-19, and now the invasion of Ukraine...It’s not surprising that Jess Chan believes there are many young people who are truly searching for something meaningful. Something steadfast in a world that is unstable.

This is one of the reasons she is spearheading the new initiative of taking Young Life to Macquarie University. “The ultimate goal is to reach young people for Jesus,” she says. “Reaching those who’ve not made a decision to follow him.”

Jess says it’s only early days but already she feels Young Life MQ is gaining traction. “When we started we were just coming out of lockdown and it was summer break so not many people were on campus. But being able to connect with people on social media, primarily Instagram, allowed us to share about who we are with those we’ve not seen on campus.”

She says a presence in the digital space can relieve some of the tension of those first days. Students can look them up online if they’re not confident enough to come and chat. “People can be hesitant at this time,” she says. “You have to be brave to put yourself out there. We’ve held a breakfast picnic, a burrito night and a coffee catch-up. We had about eight people at the breakfast.

There weren’t as many at the burrito night but we were able to deep dive into some great conversations.”

Jess says she has a heart for young people and she truly believes God knows each and every one of them.

“If I can reach just one person and share how Jesus has changed my life I will be happy because that one person matters to Him,” she says.

“He loves them and wants to see them come to Him. They might be lost or alone but He wants to be their comfort and their strength.”



“He loves them and wants to see them come to Him”



Hobart team

## Addition soon to turn into multiplication

Seeing young people walk through the door all timid and shy, to become bright and bubbly a few weeks later is what originally attracted Will Byard to volunteering for Young Life in Hobart. Jump forward about six years and Will now leads the Young Life Hobart team of seven in a voluntary capacity.

“Kids are looking for help, friendship and guidance,” he says. “It’s about building relationships with young people and creating space where they can feel safe no matter what life throws at them.”

He cited one young person who is questioning their sexuality. “This person said they feel safe with us and not judged.”

“Our regular pancake visits to a local high school are great to meet new young people,” he says. “The relationship with this

school has been going for the past six years: I think the principal wants us to do more but we are still looking to grow our resources. We have a BBQ trailer which means it’s easy for us to show up and start making pancakes. We tell people it’s Young Life, and that we hang out and do life together. We give them a flyer and invite them to our meeting up the road.”

“The team has recently grown, with new team leaders ready to inject fresh ideas to Friday nights, so we are looking forward to reaching even more young people in the days ahead!”



## The best is yet to come!



Hope Kelly | Warren Area Coordinator

“Young Life Warren in Central NSW is in a state of transition as most of its kids are now adults,” says the former Gilgandra Scripture teacher. “We’re looking to establish a new group of youth and will be working closely with the local church.”

That local church is Warren Presbyterian whose recent online posts have garnered overseas attention, with its humorous and rustic, rural charm. “All that creative energy is there to put into Young Life,” Hope says. “There won’t only be an opportunity to do adventurous things but, most importantly, we’ll be providing a connection to Jesus.”



Maigen Nemes | Monash Area Coordinator

“I have never found an organisation that fits so closely with my own views on missional community ministry,” she says. “While reaching into the university space is a new area for Monash Young Life, I am convinced of its importance at this point in the lives of these students. “Knowing who Jesus is will set them up in their early adult years, it will shape their values, help them make strong choices, and allow them to engage with the world.” Maigen was recently a primary school chaplain and still holds the position of Kids and Families Pastor at TLC Church Bayswater.

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We believe in the significance of relationships to change lives,  
protect against loneliness and build resilience.  
We believe in the power of connection to ignite Hope.

That's why Young Life Australia has been working with Australian  
young people in communities and schools since 1972.

As a Christian organisation and registered charity, our desire  
is to see young people journey into adulthood with a deep sense  
of value and purpose.