

## Welcome to Edition 3 of the D9800 RYLA Alumni Newsletter!

The release of this newsletter follows on from the 2nd RYLA Alumni social, which was held on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> March at the Holliava Bar in Swan Street Richmond.

A huge thank you goes out to **Matt Mullins (RYLA 1998)** and Holliava for all of their support and the use of their fantastic venue.

There was a great turn out of past participants and their partners from a range of years, which also contributed to an atmosphere of fun and plenty of social networking during the evening.

Throughout the evening there was a large projector display that was used to highlight the aims of the Alumni and to show the new RYLA District 9800 promotional DVD, which was produced earlier this year.

Thanks to everyone who made it out ... it was a great chance to catch up with old friends as well as providing an excellent opportunity to meet other like-minded young people that are doing brilliant things in their lives!!

To keep up to date with all the happenings for RYLA in District 9800 and "keep the buzz going" log on to ...

[www.ryla9800.org.au](http://www.ryla9800.org.au)



## New RYLA Co-Directors!

The RYLA (District 9800) program for 2007 will have two new co-directors. Everyone involved with the program is proud to announce that Emma Broughton and Tess Jenkin will be taking the helm. Both Emma and Tess are past participants of RYLA in district 9800 – Emma in 2004; Tess in 2002 – and both have been members of the RYLA team as facilitators over the past few years.

Emma and Tess will be a great asset to the program as both have demonstrated a tremendous passion and enthusiasm for RYLA.

The pair have already been really active; co-ordinating (along with the help of the RYLA committee and a number of enthusiastic past participants) the development of a RYLA promotional DVD to help with education and awareness within Rotary and across community networks; something that will be very helpful in maintaining the vital community support required when putting together an event like RYLA. The DVD looks fantastic and a huge thank you also goes out to everyone who had some involvement in putting it together.

## RYLA 2006 Program

RYLA 2006 was held from the Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December through til Friday the 8<sup>th</sup> of December at the Wonga Park Conference Centre. It was a week filled with Fun, laughter, tears, learning and resulted in some new friendships and possibly some new outlooks. Welcome to all 53 participants from RYLA 2006.



## INTERVIEW WITH AKOCH MANHEIM

Akoch Manheim grew up in southern Sudan, a country torn by civil war for over twenty years. He is a member of the 'Lost Boys' – a term used to describe a whole generation of young people, both boys and girls, displaced by the civil war of Sudan. He came to Australia in 2003 and participated in RYLA in December last year. He helped to set up the Lost Boys Association of Australia and is currently working to save for his university education.

### WHAT WAS YOUR LIFE LIKE BEFORE YOU MOVED TO AUSTRALIA?

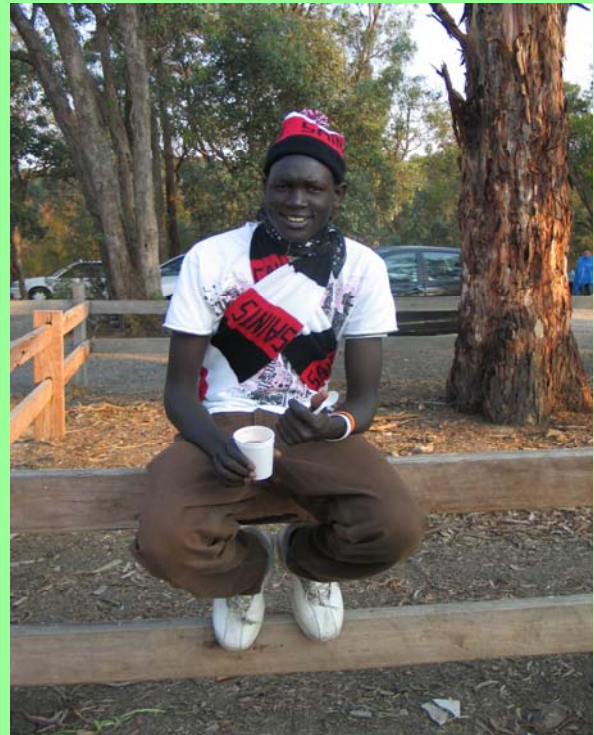
"It was very strange, and very difficult. There had been a war in southern Sudan for two decades. It was 1983 when the war broke out between southern and northern Sudan. I was maybe one year old at the time. This war went on and on and on, and all of us grew up in the war.

When you are about seven years old you get conscripted by the Arab militia, and then they train you to be a soldier. But most of us didn't accept that, so we escaped early to avoid abduction. We just moved around southern Sudan to avoid getting into trouble.

Most of the young people went to Ethiopia, when Ethiopia was captured, all of us ran back to southern Sudan, then we walked over to Kenya. We came to a refugee camp in Kenya in 1992.

I have been in the refugee camps myself for five years, and it is a terrible life. We survived the lions, because lions attacked people along the way, some other gangs hide somewhere to wait for you, maybe you might have some food, so they attack you at night, kill some people, take the food off you. All the way until people get to the refugee camp.

For my own experience, I was in a camp in southern Sudan, life was very hard, there were lots of young people. After some time there the people that were responsible for us told us to go back to our normal home because the town near us was captured. The Arab militias bombarded our centre every day, and it was very difficult to get food. So I went back to my parents. I went to help my family with the cattle. But the Arab militias attacked our cattle camp, they killed many of the older people and tried to catch the young ones. They caught me and took me to a local town. I was not happy about it, but I was too young to join the army. One of the people took me instead to look after the horses and cattle.



[Akoch at RYLA 2006]

So what I did, I ran around with that horse every day, after I had tethered the cattle at night. Everybody said I was just playing. But one day I ran on the horse until I disappeared. I tied up the horse that night in the forest, but in the morning it was gone. I had to walk through the forest for many days until I found somewhere to go.

Eventually I got to a small town, where I got someone to give me a lift in a plane to the refugee camp in Kenya. I stayed there for five years.

When I came to the refugee camp I thought it would be secure for everyone, but there is insecurity because the local people don't like refugees being there. They don't have enough food either – they rely on the United Nations as well.

We got our food fortnightly, just like we get money from Centrelink now. We got 5kg of maize to last 15 days. You have to sell 3kg to be able to grind the 2kg. You spend 2 or 3 days without food. If you are unlucky, someone comes into the camp and demands your food. If you refuse they shoot you. One day one of my friends was shot. It was very terrible. We were just sitting down talking, talking. I had a feeling something was going to happen, so I went inside. I heard the sound of a gun very close. We called the police, they came three hours later – they didn't care. Life was so difficult, wherever we went in Africa. We find it better in Australia."

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### WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THAT THE SUDANESE REFUGEES FACE COMING TO AUSTRALIA?

Akoch talks about the many difficulties that refugees deal with on a daily basis in Australia. One of the most pressing is the inadequacy of the English classes they receive. "I receive many visits from people who have completed their full amount of allocated lessons, but who need me to read their bills and forms for them."

Related to this issue is the lack of connection with Australian mainstream society, which is especially difficult for the younger people. "It is so hard to find what they need without this connection". RYLA, Akoch says, has provided him with an Australian network, which he is rapidly putting to use to help the other people in his community.

### HOW DO YOU THINK YOU BENEFITED FROM PARTICIPATING IN RYLA?

"Being a refugee, we are all disconnected from Australian society, but when I went to RYLA, I learnt a different experience. I made many friends, who could help me if I called on them to help me. I also shared a lot of ideas about how people can go on with their lives. So one person can really not learn themselves, but finding other people with different experiences, we can learn a lot. I realised that everyone has different ideas about life."

Akoch put the confidence RYLA gave him to good use almost immediately – organising a large community wedding on his return.

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE LOST BOYS GROUP FOR THE FUTURE?

"Our vision is to work together with Australian people as a community and help people back in southern Sudan. Our short term goals are creating a recreational program, and organising a big conference for all lost boys in Australia to meet.

We are the generation who have to start the education and make change in southern Sudan – there are no others."

### WANT TO HELP?

Check out the Lost Boys Association of Australia: [www.lostboys.org.au](http://www.lostboys.org.au)

Details about donations, volunteering, background info and contact details.

### November - All the way with Moby Ray

November (the month formerly known as November) is a month when blokes around the world band together to change the face of men's health.



[Aaron Callegari – early Movember]

#### How?

By growing and flowing a Moustache. In doing so raising as much moolah as they possibly can for men's health issues

#### Why?

Which ever way we look at it, men are far less healthy than women. The average life expectancy for men is 6 years less than females.

#### Again Why?

Part of the answer is a lack of awareness about the very real health issues faced by males. The good old "she'll be right" attitude and a reluctance to see a doctor about an illness or for regular medical checks also contributes to the problem.

The aim of Movember is to change this attitude, make male health fun by putting the MO back on the face of fashion and in the process raise some serious funds for key male health issues.

The key male health causes for **Movember 2006** were:

**Prostate Cancer** – In partnership with the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia ([www.prostate.org.au](http://www.prostate.org.au)) because every year in Australia 2,700 men die of prostate cancer - more than the number of women who die from breast cancer.

**Male Depression** – In partnership with Beyond Blue ([www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)) because one in six men suffer from depression at any given time but most don't seek help.

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**Testicular Cancer** – Because it's the second most common cancer in young men aged 18 to 35.

#### The Team

Team Moby Ray Comprised 11 of my mates (that's right enough tashes to field a fantastic team of Boony look-a-likes!) mainly from my work at Mowbray College, but also notably included the dashing opener Timmy Cavanagh, Super Quick Speedy Gonzalez Aaron Calegari at number 11, and myself coming in at number 3 al la Ricky Ponting.

The team didn't fail in their quest to get the runs on the board! Raising in excess of \$1, 000. with solid scores right through the line up!

Team Moby Ray will be lining up again next Movember so keep your ears open for to join a team playing for a great cause!

[Brett Easton]

### Interested in joining the RYLA Alumni Committee...?

#### What is the RYLA Alumni?

If you're receiving this newsletter then it's you! The Idea behind creating an alumni is to keep connected the multitude of people who have had some involvement whether as participants, team, supporters or presenters of the program. It is an opportunity to find what other people who have been involved with RYLA in this district (9800) are doing (and possibly how to get involved.) and basically to simply stay in touch.

#### What is the RYLA Alumni Committee?

The RYLA alumni committee is a group of past RYLarians who facilitate that process through maintaining parts of the RYLA website, creating this newsletter, organising social events from time to time, maintaining a database and exploring other opportunities to build on the network that is created out of RYLA.

#### How to get involved?

The committee is currently looking to create new opportunities for past participants to get involved. The committee is looking for people that can help with the above areas (website, newsletter, social etc...) so if you are interested please send an email to [alumni@ryla9800.org.au](mailto:alumni@ryla9800.org.au)

### Trent McCarthy at Comedy Festival !!

Anyone who participated at RYLA in 2004 or 2006 (Trent was on his honeymoon in 2005) will remember the presenter Trent McCarthy. Trent ran sessions on 'Leadership through Imagination' using various creative methods (acting, springboard stories etc...) to articulate a vision. Well as part of this years' Melbourne International Comedy Festival Trent has his own show!!

The show is Called Confessions of a talkback junkie and is playing at the Eurotrash Bar 18 Corrs Lane Melbourne, Trent will be doing six shows over the festival. A quick blurb from the comedy festival website is featured below;

*Ever wondered who all those opinionated people calling up talkback radio really are? Or maybe they're just the same person?*

*Trent has nearly completed a 12-step program to overcome his talkback addiction. Still, it's gonna be a tough night ahead. You can be part of it!*

*Finally, a show for anyone who's ever called up talkback radio (or just really, really wanted to).*

**Trent's show will be playing every Tuesday and Sunday night from the 10<sup>th</sup> of April through til the 29<sup>th</sup> of April.**



## RYLA MUSOS

Over the years there have been many talented musicians who have participated at RYLA. A lot of participants would have fond memories of listening to someone they participated with strumming away on the guitar or belting out a tune during some of the free time during the program. The musical talent has not only been plentiful but diverse as well with participants having a range of talents including the guitar, piano, drums, recorder, violin as well as many great singers and even rappers and DJ's.



(Jayden Lillyst on the Gee-tar)

Two past participants of RYLA who are regularly doing solo gigs around Melbourne are Jayden Lillyst who participated at RYLA back in 2002 and Brit Stewart (who performs and records under the pseudonym Billy Whims) who participated in 2003. Jay currently has a Saturday night residency at the Dan O'Connell Hotel and Billy has recently played a number of gigs at the Brunswick Hotel, Edinburgh Castle and Barbukka and Dirty Secrets on Smith Street Collingwood. Jayden and Billy have both written many original songs and featured below are the lyrics to one of Billy Whims songs' - At the bottom of things.

### *At the bottom of things*

*life's always at the bottom of things  
despite all these changing scenes  
and tragedies you can't believe  
it's all catching up in times like these*

*ask a pig why he stares and grins  
in a happiness that doesn't seem to  
falter with the changing winds  
and he'll tell you...*

*life's always at the bottom of things  
and history's just stuff to cling too  
and if you're wise you will just breathe in and out...*

*all that you were  
all that you didn't want to do  
stuff you were made to walk on through  
and how you wish you hadn't*

*and the water's freezing  
because it's really cold outside  
it makes you realise you're alive  
don't forget you've got fingers*

*there's a scent in the air  
it's been raining and the trees they sparkle  
it's lovely out here  
and it's a positive spin, but I don't care*

*life's always at the bottom of things  
the mountain has disappeared again  
and the clock says its time for dreaming  
but nothings really been*

*- Billy Whims*

HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN ARTICLE FOR THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER?

Email [alumni@ryla9800.org.au](mailto:alumni@ryla9800.org.au)

## The Ripple Effect

Laura Zeeman and Emily Blythe both participated in RYLA back in 2004. Both Laura and Emily have been involved with a volunteer program in Thailand over the past few years and are currently looking to recruit more members details are below;

The Ripple Effect is currently looking to recruit new and enthusiastic members to undertake in its next phase in an orphanage in rural Thailand. The program involves teaching English to 3-18 year old who live in an impoverished area approximately 6 hours from Bangkok. Successful applicants will also have to opportunity to instigate community development projects in the local area. With the help of numerous Rotary clubs around Australia and Bangkok, the project has been responsible for a number of essential items including:

- Library materials
- Water Towers
- Fish farms
- Vegetable gardens
- Playground equipment
- Computers and many other essential items in no less than 15 schools in the local area.

Successful applicants must be enthusiastic to work with children and thick skinned to cope with the basic living conditions. A commitment of two years involvement in fundraising and at least one trip to Thailand is required. First aid qualifications would be preferred but not essential.

The Ripple Effect is a fantastic opportunity for anyone interested in International Aid programs. It is guaranteed to be an unforgettable experience that will impact on participants' lives for many years into the future.

For more information or to apply please contact:  
Laura Zeeman  
laurazeemanb@yahoo.com..au  
0439301454

Emily Blyth  
emily\_blyth@yahoo.com..au  
0410258846

For email please title your interest or application 'The Ripple Effect phase 2'  
Applications Extended till the 23rd April!!

Information evening will be held in a few weeks time details will be posted on the RYLA website forum:

[www.ryla9800.org.au](http://www.ryla9800.org.au)

The next edition of the newsletter will feature an article from Laura about her experiences with 'The Ripple Effect'

## WHY NOT.....?

This section of the newsletter is about the little things we can all do that can make a huge difference. Being active in the community or 'contributing' doesn't necessarily require big sacrifices. There are lots of small things everyone can do that go a very long way. Things that can be incorporated in to your everyday life. This edition the focus is on...

### Donating Blood

Donating Blood is a great way to give something back without too much effort.

There are blood banks in most areas so to find the one closest to you simply log on to:

[www.donateblood.com.au](http://www.donateblood.com.au)

Many people today would not be alive today if it wasn't for blood donation. One in three people will rely on it at some point in their lifetimes yet only 3% of the population actually donates blood.

Regular donors are only required to give blood four times a year so the commitment is minimal yet the benefits that you're providing someone are enormous.

If you want to find out more info either log on to the website listed above or call the Red Cross Blood Service on 13 14 95.

