

## **GOLD COAST KOKODA CHALLENGE 96km and 48km event**

Unity College has entered the Kokoda Challenge as a school for the past 3 years – after the teachers entered previously in a staff team. The past 3 years has seen the participation levels grow and the number of staff and students who have had the experience rise. Below is an outline of our achievements and a write up of our most current year's results.



### **2014 Highlights**

- In 2014 the school entered 3 teams in the 96km event which saw the top team of Will Collins / Matthew Rice / Carter Armstrong and Callum Rosolen with Teacher Dave Sanders come 3<sup>rd</sup> overall in the Schools competition and in the top 30 of all teams competing.
- The 2 other teams both completed the course in 28 hours – which was a remarkable achievement for our first year – congratulations to Dave Brace and Justin Williams for getting their teams to the end.



## **2015 Highlights**

- 7 teams completed the 30km Brisbane Kokoda Challenge, with students from grades 6 – 8 competing.
- 6 teams completed the 48km Kokoda Challenge, with students from grades 9 – 12 competing.
- 3 teams completed the 96km Kokoda Challenge, with students from grades 11 and 12 competing.
- Team Unity 1 (Will Collins / Matthew Rice / Patrick Read / Carter Armstrong and staff member Dave Sanders) completed the course in 20 hours 11 minutes and were **runners-up in the Schools competition** and **15<sup>th</sup> overall – amazing!!!**



## **2016 Report**

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July saw 7 teams from Unity face up to the Ultra-endurance Kokoda Challenge. The event takes place in the Gold Coast Hinterland and the 96km event incorporates over 5km of incline and decline. This is the third year in a row the school has entered teams and it turned out to be the toughest yet!!

The weather decided to turn nasty this year making this one of the hardest events they have ever seen - with strong winds and rain for much of the day. The track became so wet that you often took 2 paces forward and then slid back 10 - that is of course if you could even stand up! This of course slowed everyone down, caused numerous falls, strained muscles and made the event take even more energy!!

Despite this all teams completed the course and the teachers involved were below

### 48km teams

Trent Balderson	12 hours 38 min 19 – 52 <sup>nd</sup> in Schools Comp
Monica Smith	12 hours 45 min 08 – 54 <sup>th</sup> in Schools Comp
Shaun Morris	12 hours 52 min 52 – 55 <sup>th</sup> in Schools Comp
Tamara Collins	14 hours 12 min 57 – 86 <sup>th</sup> in Schools Comp



All teams were fantastic and finished the course strongly thanks to the teachers massive efforts. Well done to Trent's all girls team that came in ahead of the other Unity teams, to Monica getting her girls trained up to do an amazing time and to Shaun who took no prisoners and ensured all of his teams went beyond their limits and completed the course in an amazing time. A special mention to Tamara who stepped in late in the process and then despite injuring her ankle carried on and completed the course with her group – True Kokoda spirit!!!

### 96km teams

Dave Sanders	20 hours 44 min 50 – <b>1<sup>st</sup> in Schools Comp (20<sup>th</sup> Overall)</b>
Dave Brace	27 hours 22 min 15 – 23 <sup>rd</sup> in Schools Comp (82 <sup>nd</sup> Overall)
Murray Williams	29 hours 12 min 43 – 28 <sup>th</sup> in Schools Comp (125 <sup>th</sup> Overall / 15 <sup>th</sup> in all women's teams)

A huge challenge that the weather made almost impossible at times!! Despite the huge physical challenges all teams did amazingly well and Dave Sanders team Won

the Schools Event and came 20<sup>th</sup> out of the 341 teams who completed the course. As remarkable was Dave Brace getting all his boys (physically at times) through to the end and Murray getting the all-girls team to the finish Sunday lunchtime despite pain, injuries and fatigue – coming a very impressive 15<sup>th</sup> overall in the ladies' teams.



The teachers did a great job - getting our students to go beyond their limits but still carry on and complete the course, when all they wanted to do was stop and cry!! It is a huge psychological effort over a long time - especially when they are also battling their own tiredness!!

It was also great to see the relationships formed between staff, students and parents over this period - really showing the 'Mateship' that this whole challenge is based on. A big thank you to all the parents who supported or were pit crews over the weekend - without there support this would not happen! This event showed what wonderful spirit our school has and how we really have a fantastic community here at Unity!!! I was proud to be a teacher at Unity this weekend as our staff, students and parents shone in their behaviour, attitude, effort and commitment!!!

Can't wait until next year!!!

If you have any questions or wish to sponsor the school teams, please contact Dave Sanders on [dwsanders@bne.catholic.edu.au](mailto:dwsanders@bne.catholic.edu.au)

Dave Sanders

