

# Rotary 'RYPENs' our Youth

**Rotary has programmes and projects for people of all ages. Fifteen and sixteen year old young people are catered for by the Rotary Youth Programme of Enrichment – RYPEN**



*Learning how to cross an 'electrified' fence.*



*Learning that if they all pull together – they CAN win!*

The students, mostly from Years 9 and 10 across each Rotary District, attend a weekend camp designed to develop their potential through a mixture of team-building sessions and adventure-based learning. In some camps seminars are also included. The organisers strive for equal numbers of boys and girls.

Nothing is forced upon the young people - they are free to discuss and interpret what they experience and above all, they are not patronised by the leaders who are involved in running the weekend or the Rotarians who facilitate the Camp.

Many of the young leaders, leading the groups and running the sessions, are graduates from RYLA, or Rotaractors, and are only a few years

older than the students. "Youth Leading Youth" is a catch phrase. Speakers and trainers are generally a little older. A Rotary club is the host, providing an older adult presence including the Camp parents.

During the residential weekend the young people will develop increased confidence, better self image, pride in their achievements, increased motivation, improved life skills, experience team building and develop an appreciation of the benefits of interacting with others to achieve a common purpose together with an understanding of setting and achieving goals.

The students are meeting and interacting with their peers from different backgrounds, often from



*Learning how to get 'strung-up'.*



*The 'River Crossing' exercise – pity the poor 'rocks'.*

vastly different socio-economic circumstances and from various geographic parts of the hosting Rotary District. They are drawn from high schools both in the public and private sectors.

The RYPEN experience is not necessarily for high-achievers, nor is it aimed at those who need support of a personal, intensive nature. It is for those who wish to hone their skills and become more self-assured and equipped to deal with challenges their age group faces. Clubs look for students who have undeveloped potential

Most of the RYPEN weekends are in the summer school holidays, but District 9685, just created by merging parts of D9690 with D9680, has two RYPEN camps and an increased number of places – one in February, by the sunny seaside in Collaroy in summer (at which visiting Timorese RYLarians this year were among the facilitators) and one in Springwood in June, in the beautiful Blue Mountains in winter. The pictures illustrating this article are from both these camps.



*Discussing selected topics with each other.*