

# Kokoda Trek Report - 11 June 13 - Ryan O'Neal

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My trekkers totaling 6 Mick, Kate, Holly, Coral, Simone and Craig were fortunate, for most had, had the luxury of talking with previous trekkers/friends about why Kokoda had meant so much to them when they completed the track.



We set out from Kokoda with the words of life changing experiences echoing throughout the ears. We had discussed the importance of RESPECT for the Track, for the porters, locals, each other and YOU the individual. We had discussed many things in our lead up but now the next 8 Days belonged to the experience of the track. Kokoda has that effect on you, it strips you bare. It makes you think about what is most important to you. It also defines the true importance of what Australia as a Nation has become. This group displayed that understanding from the very first step.

A highlight for many was the Isurava Memorial Site and with a clear view overlooking the Yodda Valley a ceremony paying our respects set the scene of the many sacrifices that had been made at Isurava. The story of Ralph Honner was first introduced at the Isurava Memorial. The respectfulness of his contribution on the track was reflected upon many times with our journey.



That old saying; "You don't truly know someone till you live with them", can be amplified with "You don't truly know someone till you've walked the Kokoda track with them". The track allowed us as a group, to create a bond of showing respect for each other and most importantly it gave us a deeper understanding and respect of the contributions made by the soldiers and fuzzy wuzzies in the past. In today terms it allowed our group to understand a culture through the devoted care, support & professionalism of Nelson our head local guide & his many Porters.

Our trip was shared by brother and sister team Coral and Craig as a celebration of Craig's 50th birthday. I'm happy to report that Craig came away with an apparent 1 packet a day lolly habit, however by the conclusion of the trip both he and Coral, as they walked hand in hand across Owers Corner had discovered a greater appreciation for each other & Craig was free from the clutches of his lolly habit.

Paying my respects to Kate Taylor thank you for being the "Go to girl" in our fundraising lunch for NO ROADS to Health prior to the track. Mick Jones thank you for displaying the Kokoda spirit. Holly & Simone I appreciated the laughs & fun times. Thanks again Kokoda.

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