

## RYLA Camp 2018

by Antonia Carter

I've come away from RYLA with a whole new outlook on leadership and would recommend the programme to anyone wanting to extend their own skill set.

Each year a group of motivated young people are chosen to attend the 2018 Rotary Youth Leadership Awards (RYLA) camp.

The camp is held over a week in April at Epworth Recreation Centre, Lake Karapiro.

Originally held in Australia in 1959, RYLA spread to New Zealand and is now a worldwide programme.

The camp is specifically for 20-26 year olds in the Rotary District 9930 the area stretching between Thames and Waipukurau.

I was sponsored by the Morrinsville Rotary Club to attend. Everyone I spoke to had very high praise for RYLA, so I was curious to find out more about it.

Myself and the other campers, or 'Rylarians', took part in activities that pushed us to recognise our own leadership abilities.

One of my favourite camp experiences was the team building opportunities. I took part in outdoor challenges, including raft-building, a high ropes course, and a day of caving and abseiling at Stubbs Farm in Waitomo.

Working with a range of people from different backgrounds was a great experience. Everyone got to know each other really well, and I've made a new network of friends from all around the district.

We also took part in presentations and workshops led by community leaders. Amongst these were Morrinsville Rotarian, Shelly Good, who held a workshop on structuring meetings and working styles.

The workshops were very beneficial, and topics covered had me taking a second look at my own goals and mindset.

After finishing high school I have found leadership opportunities few and far between. I haven't had the chance to take part in something as comprehensive like RYLA for a long time.

Some of us were expecting it to be like a school camp, but the activities organised by the committee made for a really engaging camp.

RYLA 9930 co-chairperson Bill Robinson said that the camp serves as a pivotal tool in turning today's young people into tomorrow's leaders.

Bill, who has been involved with RYLA for eleven years, is part of a hard-working committee who dedicate their time to the camp.

"This year's contingent were a group of awesome young professionals", said Bill. "A good mix of personalities meant that they bonded well together. Many of them have made friends for life."

Indeed, my RYLA group are already attempting to hold a reunion.

For more information on 2019's camp visit [www.rotary9930.org](http://www.rotary9930.org).