About RYLA. 15th January 2020

Stands for: **Rotary Youth Leadership Awards.**

Second week of January every year, at Elenora Heights.
Usually we have 3 or 4 RYLArians that our club sponsors but this year we had the funds to sponsor 10.
Plus a RYLArian that we paid half and the other half paid for by St. Ives Rotary Club, and they sponsored her. We also had another RYLArian that we 'gave' to St. Ives Club and they sponsored him. So really we've had been involved with 12 young people for RYLA this year.
Is being involved with RYLA worth it?
Well, over the next few weeks you'll be reading the RYLArian's experiences before and after RYLA.
On the 12th February meeting some of the 10 RYLArians will be here in person to tell their stories.
My assistant Drivers, Barbara Salisch, Christine and David Biddle (and me) collected the brand new RYLArians up at Wahroonga shop's car park on the Saturday 5th January at around 8am to drive them to RYLA.
These are young people that don't really know each other and going into a RYLA knowing **NOTHING** about RYLA except turn up, all on trust! They must be between the ages of 18 and 27.
We met some of the parents that dropped them off to us and we had to reassure them that they would get their kids back in one piece and probably 'different' and very tired kids when we returned them. Only then, after returning from RYLA, would the RYLArians and their parents understand.
That's why it's all kept a secret on what goes on at RYLA all that week.

We don't allow any RYLArians to drive, especially FROM RYLA as they will be very tired.
You see them roll their eyes because we had told them that, as young people do....
When we picked them up (I'll give you some examples) One young female RYLArian said "RYLA was fantastic, but I only got 25 minutes sleep, for the WHOLE week."
Then fell asleep, woke up, apologised, then went back to sleep.
It was a 45 minute drive to her home from Wahroonga; she did wake again, apologised again, then we had a great discussion on how this RYLA week changed her life.
Another RYLArian started to talk then faded out with his head back sound asleep.
Bob Howe told me that another RYLArian, when he arrived home, went upstairs, placed his bag on the floor, flopped on the bed and woke up 14 hours later.

It costs $875 per RYLArian and they receive approximately $7,000.00 worth of commercial training.
So this RYLA the 61 RYLArians received nearly half a million dollars of training and that's not an insubstantial contribution to mould young people into good leaders in our society.
The RYLA numbers were slightly down this year and there was talk that the bushfires had some affect.

We think that sending as many young people to RYLA as we can afford, gives far more back to the community and spreads the word of Rotaract and Rotary to their parents and friends than sending one young person on a Rotary Youth Exchange overseas for 12 months.
That one cost for one person to travel overseas can fund many RYLArians.
Don't get me wrong, I'm not against Rotary Exchange.
Thank you.