

CULTIVATE

Nurturing faith from seed to fruit



Vol. 5 — March 2026

5

Tyre-Sized
Track Marks
in Kids' Lives

9

A Ripe Harvest
Field in Western
Sydney

11

Distance
No
Barrier

15

Led by Christ.
Serving
Together

CRU[®]

Contents

2 *From Nick's Desk*

4 *Annual Report*

5 *Tyre-Sized Track Marks in Kids' Lives*

8 *Opportunity Knocks at Lake Mac*

9 *A Ripe Harvest Field in Western Sydney*

11 *Distance No Barrier*

13 *Spring CRU Camps*

14 *Summer CRU Camps*

15 *Led by Christ. Serving Together*

18 *An Upgraded Dining Hall*

Front Cover: Campers at CRU Lake Mac



From Nick's Desk

A task incomplete

Do you leave tasks unfinished? Jobs undone? I can't stand dirty dishes left on the bench or a half-unpacked dishwasher. But a shovel in the garden or a lunchbox in a bag for a few days? That's a different story!

"This is why CRU's work to tell the next generation is so vital — and will never be finished until He returns!"

Starting as CRU CEO, I've been reminded by my to-do list and various people that the list of things to do never ends! There's always more. Incomplete tasks feel uncomfortable. Should it always feel that way?

Think about CRU's vision: **"Sharing Jesus with a new generation."** How do you tick that off the list? You can't! At least not until Jesus returns. There will always be another generation, more children and youth who need to know their Saviour and risen Lord.

Recently, while reading John 19 with a young guy I mentor, three words stopped us: **“It is finished”** (John 19:30).

What was finished?

Jesus’ earthly (pre-resurrection) life was ending, but it was far more than that. His mission was complete. Just two verses earlier, John records, *“After this, Jesus, knowing that everything had now been completed, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, ‘I am thirsty.’”* (19:28). They gave the sour wine on a sponge, he tasted it, then said, ‘It is finished’ before bowing his head and giving up his spirit. At the cross, in the event of His death and resurrection, Jesus completed his mission, **fulfilling the Scriptures**. That little phrase carries the weight and content of the entire Old Testament!

Jesus lived the perfect life, doing all that was right, even through temptation and torment. As Israel was God’s chosen people, Jesus was God’s chosen person, fulfilling all righteousness. In His final cry, **“It is finished,”** Jesus declared His obedience to the very end. He came to serve and suffer, and he completed that work, dying as the perfect, unblemished sacrifice.

John writes as an eyewitness, *“His testimony is true... so that you also may believe”* (19:35). He concludes, *“These things happened so that the Scripture would be fulfilled”* (19:36).

Paul echoes this in 1 Corinthians 15:3–4, *“...Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”*

Jesus did all that was required, all that was foretold, all that was needed. He completed

His earthly work so He could ascend and reign as risen Lord of all.

This is why CRU’s work to tell the next generation is so vital — and will never be finished until He returns! Because Jesus reigns over all, all need to submit to His reign. Our faith doesn’t put Him on the throne; He’s there because He finished His work. He died and rose to reign forever.

Which leaves everyone with a choice: Will we recognise His reign or not? And if we do, let’s commit to telling others, especially the next generation!

Thank you for standing with us in this vital work of sharing the great news of Jesus’ finished work.

In Him,

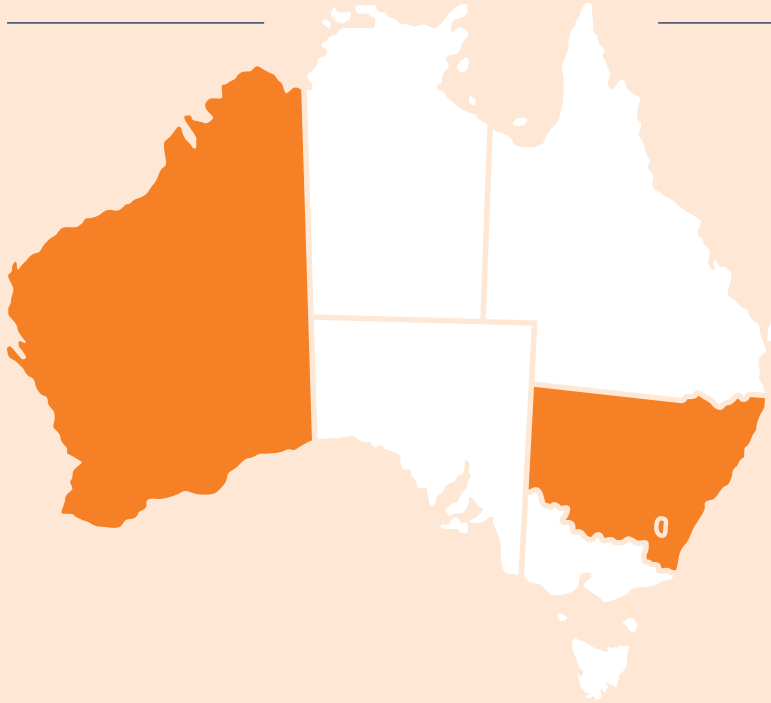
Nick Hood

Nick Hood, CEO

“There will always be another generation, more children and youth who need to know their Saviour and risen Lord.”

Annual Report

7 highlights from our 2024/25 Annual Report



Over 123,400 young people

reached with the gospel through

-  CRU Educational Camps
-  Holiday & Day Camps
-  Schools Ministry

on the **East and West coasts.**

1,137 young people

indicated they **became a Christian** or **recommitted to following Jesus.**

260 schools

supported in **NSW, the ACT and WA.**

7,438 campers

indicated they **wanted to attend a church or youth group** after camp.

233,467 meals

were served to **39,356 guests** at **CRU Galston Gorge and CRU Lake Mac.**

c. 6,200 students

meet in **CRU Groups at school** each week.

1,275+ volunteers

ran **60 Holiday Camps** and **12 Day Camps.**



SCAN HERE to view the **full 2024–2025 Annual Report** or visit cru.edu.au/annual-report

Tyre-Sized Track Marks in Kids' Lives

How eDirtbikes are helping share the gospel with a unique bunch of kids

1973 — the year the Watergate scandal began to unfold, the World Trade Centre opened in New York as the world's tallest building, the Sydney Opera House officially opened, the first barcode was scanned, and the first handheld mobile phone call was made.

This was also the year the first CRU minibike camp was held, on a 20-acre property called "Coorabin" in North Richmond, with boys riding Honda QA 50cc dirtbikes.

In 1984/85 minibike camps moved to Galston Gorge where they were run until 2000 when they moved to Attunga in the Southern Highlands. By then the camps were open to both boys and girls and they rode Honda XR80s and XR100s, much more powerful (and noisy) bikes. The last dirtbike camp with petrol-fuelled bikes was run in 2023.

Now a new era has dawned for dirtbike camps!

In June 2025, a new fleet of electric dirtbikes was introduced (Talaria Sting R-MX4 TL4000 bikes for those who are interested in such things), and the next generation of dirtbike camps was brought back to Galston Gorge after two decades away.

What's so special about dirtbikes and dirtbike camps you ask? Good question.

Yes, electric bikes are good for the environment and are deathly quiet (you really can't hear them coming) but that's not what makes them special. It's about the kids who come on these camps and the opportunities for the gospel they provide. You see, often the kids who attend dirtbike camps only come on these kinds of camps. These camps have a unique style, culture and community.

So, bringing back the dirtbike camps with electric bikes was a no-brainer. And with the huge reduction of noise, we could bring the camps back to CRU Galston Gorge without fear of disturbing the neighbours.

13-year-old Alexander became a Christian on Dirt Action last winter. He recalled how it "was a fun, thrilling camp. Learning about God and hearing the leaders' life stories really inspired me to become a follower of Jesus." Georgia, also on Dirt Action shared, "Camp helped me see Jesus more clearly. Leaders explained the gospel really well and I understand it better now." Lou Ann from Easyriders in spring recommitted to following Jesus saying, "It was the perfect way to spend my week." William shared, "The best things about camp were God, adventures, adrenaline and fun! Camp helped me better understand the Bible and helped my friends love God." Ashlie recommitted her faith on Extreme Bikes, "It was very exciting, extremely scary and I made new friends. Camp also helped me learn more about Jesus."



Campers on Dirt Action, winter 2025



Jess Thorpe has been leading on dirtbike camps since 2011, and now co-directs Easyriders with her husband, Andrew.

“Dirtbike camps always leave a tyre-sized track mark in kids’ holidays. Many kids come for the excitement of learning to ride a dirtbike or honing their skills on new tracks, the adventure it brings or the friends they make. But it’s more than that. It’s amazing to see how Jesus and His love for us, told through the story of the Bible, makes a difference to kids today. To share with them this awesome news is a blessing and a privilege.

“CRU dirtbike camps are unique because they provide the opportunity to learn a specialised activity, taught by experienced and caring leaders who love Jesus. They also reach kids with the gospel who maybe wouldn’t choose other camps. As we teach kids new skills

on the bikes, we build them up, encourage them, trust them and seek to show that we care for them, especially when riding isn’t easy. I see this as a valuable ministry that impacts kids for the glory of God. Kids matter and are valuable to Jesus whether they get A’s or detentions, and so they matter to us.”

Reflecting back over the last 13 years of leading on dirtbike camps, Jess is encouraged to see the immense impact these camps have:

“I have been blessed to chat with many young people about life and God over the years. But it’s always the kids who are considered hard, whom I love to chat with and spend extra time with. Each time, they are totally surprised that us leaders want to care for them, and that God loves them as they are. I had the privilege of being on camp with one such kid who had lots of hard struggles in her life. After a hard week on camp, as she navigated new spaces and friends and rules, she gave her life to Jesus because she realised that He would never leave her, He loved her as she was, and she could be part of God’s family. We were able to gift her a Bible and some options for youth groups near where she lived to help her as she started her new life with him as her Lord and Saviour. Praise God!”

Give thanks for dirtbike camps and the unique opportunities they provide for sharing Jesus with the next generation of rev-heads, mechanics and bike enthusiasts.



For more information about
CRU Dirtbike Camps and
CRU Camps in general, visit
www.crucamps.com.au

“CRU dirtbike camps are unique because they provide the opportunity to learn a specialised activity, taught by experienced and caring leaders who love Jesus.”



Opportunity Knocks at Lake Mac



“I decided to become a follower of Jesus for the first time on camp this week. Being able to learn about the Bible in depth and having insight on everyone’s experiences was very eye-opening.”

These are the words of Ryan, a 17-year-old camper whose week at Lake Mac in January opened his eyes to the truth about Jesus.

In fact, because of the Stage 1 redevelopment of Lake Mac, 21,984 campers were able to hear about Jesus on camp in 2025. Praise God!!

And thanks to generous supporters, Stage 2 of the CRU Lake Mac redevelopment is now underway.

This second stage aims to provide **an additional 7,100 children each year** with the opportunity to encounter Christ at Lake Mac by constructing a 104-bed lodge and large meeting room overlooking the iconic jetty.

Stage 2 is being funded by a blend of borrowings (made possible by the surplus generated by Stage 1 bookings) and tax-deductible donations from supporters who want to see more kids come to know and follow Jesus.

Whilst construction has begun, we have not yet raised all the necessary funds.

Please consider if you are able to contribute to this exciting project. By doing so you will be helping an extra 7,100 kids hear the life-saving message of the gospel in a fun environment in which they will meet young Christian role models.



To make a tax-deductible donation, please get in touch with Anna Burke on 0400 279 213 or visit crulakemac.com.au/stage2



Western Sydney MegaCRU at St Paul's Grammar in Term 4, 2025

A Ripe Harvest Field in Western Sydney

Western Sydney MegaCRU — the newest
addition to CRU's Schools Ministry calendar

“**Y**ou will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8b) These are well-known and well-loved words from the book of Acts, outlining God's great plan for the spread of the gospel once the Holy Spirit was given to His disciples at Pentecost. It would start in Jerusalem and then spread out to the surrounding areas and then to the ends of the earth — to all nations, peoples, tribes and languages.

Australia certainly fits the bill for 'the ends of the earth'! Western Sydney is at the frontier

of a growing metropolis containing almost half of Sydney's population and growing at more than 2% each year, higher than Greater Sydney's overall growth rate.¹ It's also one of Sydney's most multicultural regions with some suburbs recording 88% of residents speaking a language other than English.²

Independent schools here are also growing at a rapid rate — at Oran Park, Leppington, Marsden Park and Penrith to name a few — to cater for a booming population. The Association of Independent Schools of NSW (AISNSW) predicts that the Independent Schools sector is expected to gain an additional 45,000 students

¹ <https://profile.id.com.au/cws/population-estimate>

² <https://www.id.com.au/insights/articles/western-sydney-profile-a-region-of-diversity-and-growth/>

over the next 10 years across the state, which will certainly impact Western Sydney³.

“Students from Western Sydney schools were keen to meet together in their own region, with their own flavour, to encourage each other and shine as a bright light to those around them in their communities.”

CRU Schools Ministry sees the potential for reaching the nations in Western Sydney and has already made inroads into this ripe harvest field, currently visiting and supporting 50 schools in the region with over 1,400 students meeting each week in 40+ CRU Groups.

However, these students are a long way from the North Shore or Eastern Suburbs where many of our networking and training events are often held. Senior students find it difficult to attend CRU’s regional events, InterCRU and MegaCRU, due to long travel times which cut too much into Friday night youth groups. Schools here sometimes struggle to include music or a band for singing at their CRU Group meetings, but they are a feature of these regional events. The kids in the west didn’t want to miss out.

They asked for their own regional MegaCRU at a time that suited them better and so the Western Sydney MegaCRU was born!

“Students from Western Sydney schools were keen to meet together in their own region, with their own flavour, to encourage each other and shine as a bright light to those around them in their communities. We were delighted to help organise a new MegaCRU just for them. Praise God for the huge number of students who attended. We pray this is just the start of a journey that bears much fruit for the Lord” shares CRU Schools Ministry Worker and MegaCRU organiser, Jason Todd.

Held in Term 4, 2025, at St Paul’s Grammar School, Cranebrook, this new MegaCRU was the largest inter-school event ever held! Over 370 students from 11 different schools came together to sing praises to God, hear from His Word, pray and spur one another on in faith. Rev David Simmons, former Cronulla Sharks and Penrith Panther rugby league player and Penrith Panthers Chaplain, now the Assistant Minister at Emu Plains Anglican Church, was the guest speaker at the event, speaking from Hebrews and encouraging students with the message that Jesus is better than what this world has to offer.



Students at Western Sydney MegaCRU

Thank God for His powerful work among the nations in Western Sydney, for the success of the Western Sydney MegaCRU, and for the many students who meet each week in CRU Groups in this region. Ask that, under God’s sovereignty, this event might lead to greater ministry in this area and pray for boldness and open hearts as students share Jesus with their friends at school and in their wider communities in the year ahead.

³ <https://www.isnsw.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/Education-research-school-data-enrolment-dynamics-2025-report.pdf>

Distance No Barrier

18-year-old Hannah Combe shares how CRU West camps have impacted her faith and given her community, despite the distance.



Hannah Combe, CRU West camper (right)

How far would you go to attend a camp? 25km? 50km? 100km? How about 1500km? That's 16 hours by road or 2 hours by plane, the equivalent distance from Sydney to Melbourne and almost back again. That's how far Hannah Combe went to attend CRU West's Quest camp!

Hannah grew up in a Christian family, going to Sunday School and church with her parents, her dad being an Anglican minister and now a Chaplain to Mission to Seafarers in Dampier in the north-western Pilbara region of WA. When Hannah was about 14 or 15, she attended a Christian conference where they explored the book of Ruth, and it really struck her that "Jesus will never leave us and will always want to stay with us like Ruth and Naomi and their relationship. Our relationship with Jesus can be like that too. And I was like, wow!"

But being a kid in a regional town was tough. Hannah attended the local high school. "It was really hot some days. Sometimes the air con wouldn't work and you'd be like, why am I at school? Also, there wasn't really any other Christian kids my age. Basically, growing up in the church, there was me, my sister, and one of her friends. That was it. It could be a bit isolating."

One year, at a conference where all the ministers from across the North-West Diocese came together to recharge, they didn't know what to do with all the youth who came. But they saw CRU West running camps in Perth so sent the youth to camp for the week. Hannah, in Year 8 at the time, attended CRU Quest. "I had so much fun on those four days that, when I got home, I said to dad, I want to do this again."

Hannah has since been on eight CRU Camps including some 'Big Summers' and 'CrossTrains' and most recently 'CRU West Leavers' in November last year. "Seeing that there were other Christians my age out there — that was an amazing highlight! Camp was encouraging and transforming, the leaders were great and I made some good friends.



Hannah on camp with friends (third from left)

“After one CRU Camp a few years ago, a group of us decided to stay in contact and have weekly Bible studies with each other online. Me in Karratha, others from Broome, Port Hedland, and Perth. The first book we went through was Ephesians, and then I think we did Romans. It was really encouraging just to see each other every week. And we still stay in contact even now.”

“Seeing that there were other Christians my age out there — that was an amazing highlight!”

CRU Camps have had a profound impact on Hannah, particularly given her remote location. “Coming down to a CRU Camp and seeing everyone and hearing all the teenagers say

‘Amen’ at the same time — that was amazing! It’s the best feeling ever knowing that it’s not just me.”

Having just finished Year 12, Hannah plans on doing a gap year with SMBC in Sydney, spending time with God as she studies a Diploma of Christian Foundations, goes on a cultural study tour and travels overseas on a mini mission trip. After that, she hopes to study nursing in Perth and lead on a CRU Camp or two.

Thank God for Hannah and how He has worked in her life. Give thanks that God isn’t limited by distance or remoteness but that he works through all situations for His glory. Pray for Hannah as she studies away from home and ask that she would grow and deepen her love for the Lord as she depends more and more on Him.

SPRING CRU CAMPS



607 campers attended 14 CRU Camps in NSW and WA in spring 2025. They enjoyed activities such as sailing, surfing, zipline, archery, waterskiing, cave maze, canoeing, abseiling, campfires and much more. Most importantly, campers experienced caring, Christian community and explored Gospel truths. We thank God for the 255 volunteer leaders who commit their time and expertise to make these camps happen. Praise Him for the 42 children who indicated that they made faith commitments to Jesus this season.



SUMMER CRU CAMPS



1,021 campers attended 25 CRU Camps over the summer holidays, with 88 indicating a faith commitment — praise God! As campers enjoyed rock climbing, BMX, archery tag, sailing, dragon boats, tubing, and so much more, they also had the opportunity to learn about the God who loves them and ask their big questions about life and faith. We give thanks to the 417 leaders who gave up their holidays to help run and lead these camps so well.



Led by Christ. Serving Together

Cameron Veerhuis & Joel Spence share what encourages them most about CRU Educational Camps.

1 Corinthians 12:27 says “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”

Ever wondered what true job satisfaction looks like? Meet two of our newer CRU Educational Camps staff, Cameron and Joel,

who would both say they have one of the best jobs in the world! They joined CRU’s camp-based ministry as leaders in 2025, with God guiding them each on a unique journey to CRU and now playing their parts in His mission to school students.



Cameron Veerhuis, Training Coordinator with CRU Educational Camps

Cameron, previously working as an electrical engineer but, with previous camp ministry experience, shares how he felt God calling him out of his previous job. “I was doing the work but not interacting with people much. It was all business. I remember thinking I can’t take a step back from engineering. To do any other job, I’d be taking less pay or starting again. But then it just kind of clicked. I shouldn’t let the world’s expectations keep me from following where God is leading.

I started looking at other jobs and asking ‘what am I passionate about? I love camping ministry and I love working with youth.’”

Cameron is now a Training Coordinator on the CRU Educational Camps team and “loves that ministry is so infused in everything that CRU does. It’s such a breath of fresh air.”

Joel was in a corporate role when he first had an interview with CRU, after God had been softening his heart towards a ministry role. “For a long time, I kind of ran away from ministry, with my parents being ministers, and I said to God, okay, if you actually want me to go into ministry you’ve got to do a bit of work in me.”

***“Ministry is so infused
in everything that CRU does.
It’s such a breath of fresh air.”***

Joel is a Camp Coordinator, directing CRU Educational Camps. He loves that every day is different — he’s outdoors and there’s purpose behind everything. He says that “even on the hard days I am motivated because I get to share the good news of Jesus with students.”

Both Cameron and Joel agree that there is a uniqueness about the camp environment that is so beneficial for students, teachers and schools. CRU Educational Camps provide students and teachers opportunities outside of their normal everyday routine which

in turn allows for greater connection following on from camp. The team strive to create both a safe space for campers to explore and ask questions as well as opportunities to get out of their comfort zone and be challenged.



Campers exploring the Bible on camp

“It’s one of the great benefits of camping ministry where kids take huge leaps in their faith because they’re in that environment. They make new friends, try new things, push out of their comfort zone and have all that connected back to God and how He wants to grow them as well.”

One of the key strengths of CRU Educational Camps is the meaningful partnerships they build with schools. Even in the short time they have with students, the impact often reaches far beyond camp. Cameron reflects, ‘I love it when we hear that teachers have been praying for their kids before camp because they know it’s going to be such a special time outside of the school environment.’

A highlight for Joel last year was when he was in a discussion group with a Year 8 student who was fairly reserved initially but by the end of camp was involved in really good conversations. “It was so good to see him



Joel Spence, Camp Coordinator with CRU Educational Camps

actually explore his faith because someone was willing to sit and wrestle through the hard questions with him.”

Another strength of CRU Educational Camps is the intentional discipleship of young leaders. In his role as a Training Coordinator, Cameron sees a beautiful picture of biblical community — where everyone is growing together and learning from one another. As he puts it, “The old can learn from the young and the young can learn from the old.”

Having welcomed a new cohort of Summit Program Trainees this year, Joel and Cameron share a deep sense of anticipation for how God will grow and encourage this diverse group of emerging leaders. Their wide range of gifts and abilities beautifully reflects the kingdom

of God—many parts forming one body—working together so that even more students can hear the good news of Jesus through CRU Educational Camps.



**For more information about
CRU Educational Camps, visit**

www.cru.edu.au/educational-camps/

“Kids make new friends, try new things, push out of their comfort zone and have all that connected back to God and how He wants to grow them.”



An Upgraded Dining Hall

We're so thankful to everyone who supported our Christmas Appeal last year. Generous donors raised more than \$70,000 to help us upgrade our Galston Gorge dining hall.

Our dining hall is at the centre of our guests' camp experience — a space where they gather multiple times a day and where conversations about faith naturally take place over meals. But our catering facilities in the servery area were increasingly stretched as we welcomed guests from all over Sydney and beyond, many with additional dietary needs. Our large camper numbers meant leaders and campers were struggling to hear each other in the dining hall due to the poor acoustics — which made it difficult to engage campers in faith-filled discussions.

But in God's kindness through our generous supporters, these two issues have been addressed, as our dining hall upgrades have

been completed — and we're already seeing an impact. Leaders have told us how much easier it is to hold faith-based conversations during meals, and meals are far more easily managed by our staff team now that we have a designated servery and food storage area just for special diets.

These changes aren't just practical; they allow campers to hear the gospel and to experience Christ's love as we actively meet dietary needs. As one Holiday Camp leader shared, "the changes to the dining hall were incredible! I could actually hear the campers as they shared their stories, and I could tell them about Jesus without raising my voice."

Changes like these make a real difference, and we couldn't do it without our CRU community. Thank you to everyone who continues to support our work through prayer and financial giving.

Choose your upcoming camp adventure.



**So much fun.
New experiences.
Amazing people.**

This is CRU Camps.

Choose from 30+ CRU Camp adventures in the upcoming school holidays. Ziplining, dirt biking, rock climbing, archery, sailing, tubing, abseiling, skiing, snowboarding, HSC & IB study and so much more! Be sure to register early so you don't miss out.

Find out more:
crucamps.com.au



crucamps@cru.edu.au
(02) 9874 8933 (Opt 1)

PO Box 590 Eastwood NSW 2122