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Nurturing faith from seed to fruit



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Front Cover: CRU Campers enjoying canoeing on Lake Macquarie — Summer 2026



From Nick's Desk

Nothing takes God by surprise — Psalm 31

Early this year, I visited a school to speak at their chapel and visit their lunchtime CRU group. It's been a little while since I gave a talk to a large group of primary children, so I made sure I was well prepared with my Bible in one hand and props in the other.

At the start, I brought out a large black box. Picking it up and shaking it, I asked, "Do you know what's inside?"

The Kindy kids in the front row had wide eyes of anticipation; the older kids had big smiles and hands up. The teachers' faces suggested some uncertainty as to what might come out!

A few students shouted guesses. Many were keen to volunteer to come up the front and reach inside. Were they courageous, or silly, or both? Time would tell.

They didn't know what was coming. No matter what they discovered, there was still an element of surprise.

As the kids came up, curiosity turned to anticipation and then surprise.

A soft toy...

A plastic snake...

A water pistol... Then the crowd got soaked!

And then, out came a very silly dancing robot that danced to its own music. When I couldn't turn it off, the kids couldn't turn off their laughter, and my talk was derailed for a little longer than I had hoped.

Like my black box, life is full of surprises. Kids don't know what is coming next. They don't know what's coming in life. None of us do.

As adults, we might be better at hiding our shock and surprise, but we still feel it. We all get surprised in life because we don't know everything and we aren't in control of everything.

Except God. **God is never surprised.**

Nothing takes God by surprise. Nothing...

Not one thing!

*“When we’re surprised or uncertain, coming to God
and committing ourselves to Him is the greatest act of trust.”*

We can know this as information, but do we trust it in our hearts? Do we trust God — trust that He knows, trust that He’s in control?

King David puts words to this trust:

*“But I trust in you, O Lord;
I say, ‘You are my God.’
My times are in your hands.”*
(Psalm 31:14–15, NIV)

David’s life is under threat. He speaks in the Psalm about traps being laid to catch him: a “net they hid for me” (31:4). He recounts his distress, pain and suffering (vv. 7–11). He feels rejected, forgotten and under direct attack (vv. 11–13).

Instead of reaching for answers from around him or demanding to know why, David speaks to God and simply says, “*You are my God. My times are in your hands.*” In other words: “I’m surprised and I don’t know what, how or why. But God isn’t.”

David asks to be rescued and delivered from his enemies, and he does so with trust: He knows God is not surprised and is still in control.

When we’re surprised or uncertain, coming to God and committing ourselves to Him is the greatest act of trust.

Many years after King David penned this Psalm, King Jesus was in a big storm. It was big enough to terrify experienced boaties but Jesus slept. Surprised, and with a little faith in what Jesus might do, they woke him. He asked them, “*Why are you so afraid?*” The answer seems obvious: “There is a great storm pummeling a small boat!” But Jesus isn’t afraid. He’s not surprised.

Sometime later, Jesus was led to a cross to be crucified. Those around him would have been

shocked. Many interpreted the situation as an utter failure. Not Jesus. He knew it was coming; he felt the pain, but he wasn’t surprised.

Jesus knows and Jesus is in control. Which means it’s okay when we’re not.

During my chapel talk, I asked another group of volunteers to come up the front. This time, the box had items that represented events that might occur in a person’s life.

A medallion... maybe they’d won
a sporting award.

A stethoscope... maybe a troubling health
issue or they’d become a doctor.

A fancy vest... maybe they’d become famous
or needed to dress up for a big life event.
No dancing robots this time!

The reality is we just don’t know what will happen in life. We’re not in complete control. But God knows and He is.

And that is true for CRU’s ministry too: we don’t know what’s around the corner or what God will do next, but we can trust that our times, our work and the young people we serve are in His sure hands.

Nothing takes God by surprise and he invites us to say, with David:

*“But I trust in you, O Lord;
I say, ‘You are my God.’
My times are in your hands.”*
(Psalm 31:14–15, NIV)

Nick

Nick Hood, CEO



**But those who hope in the
Lord will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.**

Isaiah 40:31



Debra with students from Nowra Anglican College at FIT, September 2026

Backbone of a Thriving CRU Group

Equipping young leaders at Nowra Anglican College to grow, flourish and serve with confidence

Backbones are essential! Without one, the human body would collapse into an indistinct, floppy mess. The spine is not just a structural support; it plays a pivotal role in stabilising, motivating and enabling coordinated action.

Debra Baker, the Junior School Chaplain at Nowra Anglican College considers CRU's FIT training program (Followers in Training) to be the backbone of their CRU Groups. She takes her Year 5 and 6 student leaders to FIT twice a year to be equipped in Christian leadership and empowered to put these skills into practice at school. This is a valuable opportunity for her students to develop maturity, confidence, initiative, teamwork, servant-hearted attitudes and to put their faith into action.

Debra runs two CRU Groups each week — one for Year K-2 students and another for Years 3-6. She shares why their CRU Groups are so important, "These groups remind students that faith isn't just something learned in a classroom, but something that can shape the way we treat others, respond to challenges, and contribute positively to the life of the school."

"One of the most special aspects of our CRU Groups is seeing older students walking alongside younger ones, making them feel included and encouraging them to love Jesus. They are building meaningful relationships, positive connections and a strong sense of community in the school."

This year, a group of twelve Year 5 and 6 girls are enthusiastically serving as leaders for both CRU Groups. Debra is so thankful for their heart for Jesus, their willingness to serve and their eagerness to grow their leadership skills. “We have wonderful leaders running the show, making my job super easy. The leaders work together to organise a roster, present Bible stories, run games and help facilitate activities for the younger students. They are growing in communication, organisation and public speaking while also learning how to encourage and care for others. Seeing them give up their own lunchtime to serve others shows such incredible maturity. Our CRU leaders are wonderful role models who encourage inclusion, kindness and faith in action. Praise our Lord!”

Recently, Debra took a group of 18 students to FIT on the NSW South Coast. “FIT training equips our CRU leaders with practical tools to lead effectively, work as a team and be a positive influence on their peers. It also allows students to connect with other young leaders from different schools, helping them feel inspired, encouraged and supported in their faith and leadership journey.”

Debra has seen firsthand how FIT has helped her student leaders back at school. “Leaders have included fresh ideas into their storytelling, introduced new games and looked out for quieter kids or ones who are unsure, and made them feel included.

“A standout moment was when eight Year 5 girls took the initiative to split our K-2 group into small circles for discussion groups and prayed beautifully with the younger children. What a blessing!”



Debra Baker, Chaplain of Nowra Anglican College Junior School

Debra is so thankful for CRU’s support. She considers the Schools Ministry team the backbone of her ministry and growth too. “I would be completely lost without CRU. When I first started this journey at Nowra Anglican College 10 years ago, I had never even seen a chapel service, let alone felt capable of running one.

“Over the years, the consistent visits and training days (including Teachers’ Conference held earlier this year) have equipped, inspired and encouraged me in my role which I love. I am so deeply thankful for CRU. I truly value the opportunities to soak up their wisdom every time we connect.”

“FIT training equips our CRU leaders with practical tools to lead effectively, work as a team and be a positive influence on their peers.”



*Followers
in
Training*

To find out more about Schools Ministry’s FIT training program, visit
cru.edu.au/schools-ministry/students

Generations Afloat: Faith, Family, and Sailing Camps

Sixty years, three generations, one mission: a family's story of faith in action

It's a bright, sunny day. A decent breeze is blowing, and small waves are lapping around me. I'm sitting at the front of a powerboat with Bill Jauncey at the helm in the middle of Lake Macquarie. I have a camera at the ready to capture kids laughing and having fun as they sail around the lake. Bill is on duty, watching over the campers to keep them safe, and we chat as we motor around. He shares a bit about his family and that he's leading on camp with his granddaughter, maybe a first for CRU!

I recently asked Bill and two of his grandchildren to share a bit about their time on camp.

Bill, what's your background and how did you come to be involved with CRU?

I had gone forward at the 1959 Billy Graham Crusade but was only going to church once a month with my father. But I was attending CRU at school which helped maintain and grow my faith. In January 1961, having just completed my second year of high school I attended my first CRU Camp — Intermediate Boys Sailing Camp. I then went on a sailing camp every year thereafter while at school. After my Leaving Certificate, my teacher, Stuart Braga,

invited me to join Inter Boys as a junior leader which I did. Laurie Little invited me again the year after as he saw junior leading as a way to equip young people for leadership and to grow their faith. I have been leading on sailing camps ever since.

Why do you continue to lead on sailing camps, over 60 years later?

I keep coming back because it's a unique way for young people to hear the Gospel and for God's Spirit to work in their hearts. I'm blessed to play a small part in this valuable ministry that had such an impact on me as a teenager.

Two of your grandchildren led on a sailing camp last summer — Solomon (Soli) on Sailing Adventure and Poppy on Sailing Away with you. How special was that for you?

Leading with Poppy was a real privilege and, I guess, very few people experience such a joy. Both Poppy and Soli have been able to put their sailing skills to good use, as have my three children (two daughters having gone through the Summit Program as well).

Poppy, what was it like leading on camp with your grandad, Bill?

Leading on camp with my grandad was so encouraging. In him, I see what it means to live a life dedicated to the Lord and others. It was



Poppy Black and Bill Jauncey



Sailing Away leadership team (Bill in back row on the left and Poppy in middle row, third from left)

also a great way to spend time with him, and it was good to use all the sailing skills he's taught me throughout my life, plus we carpooled so I didn't have to pay for petrol — a bonus!

Why did you decide to lead on a CRU sailing camp?

After hearing about the great experiences that my grandad, parents and aunties have had over the years on CRU Camps, I wanted to experience it for myself. I also love working with teenagers as a youth leader at my church. This, combined with a lifetime of sailing with grandad, made the decision to lead on a CRU sailing camp easy. It's also, and most importantly, a great opportunity to serve and glorify God.

How did you see God at work on camp?

I believe there's nothing more important than sharing the gospel with others, and I loved that we got to do that with a real mixture of kids in a fun program and caring community. Seeing kids commit their lives to Christ was a wonderful and powerful thing and seeing kids who started out being pretty opposed to the gospel become curious and want to explore Jesus' claims more was very encouraging.

Soli, what are your thoughts about leading on a CRU Camp over summer?

My parents led on CRU Camps when they worked for CRU. They suggested the idea of leading on a CRU Camp and I saw it as a good opportunity to serve others and draw closer to Jesus myself. I enjoyed seeing campers engaging with the gospel and prayers being answered. Seeing God at work in people's lives and in my own life has grown my faith.

Finally, Bill, why are CRU Camps so special to you and your family?

I am forever thankful that I have seen my children and now my grandchildren involved in such a wonderful ministry to youth, which over the past sixty years has been so important to each of us. As William Barclay puts it "...the life and death of Jesus are the demonstration and the proof of the limitless, the undefeatable, unchangeable, unalterable, infinite love of God." (William Barclay. The Apostles' Creed. — [Was Crucified] P92).



If you'd like more information about leading on CRU Camps, visit cruccamps.com.au/volunteer/

Autumn CRU Camps



Autumn CRU Camps welcomed 618 campers on 11 residential and day camps, where campers were challenged, inspired, and thrilled as they enjoyed waterskiing, horse riding, canoeing, rock climbing, ziplining, sailing, archery, and much more. Against the backdrop of a safe and caring camp community, campers explored life's big questions, engaged with the Bible, and considered the claims of Christ. We praise God for the 32 young people who indicated they made a commitment or recommitment to follow Jesus during the autumn camp season.



Winter CRU Camps



Dirtbikes, laser tag, pony rides, skiing, mountain bikes, snowboarding, campfires, rock climbing, archery tag, BMX, carnivals and coding — just some of the amazing activities enjoyed by 1,077 young people on 22 CRU Camps over winter. Campers also had the opportunity to discover more about the Bible, ask questions, and form lasting friendships, all while being cared for by dedicated Christian leaders. 55 youth indicated they made a faith commitment to Christ over winter.



A Life Changed; A Faith Shared

Izzy's unexpected adventure at Summit

Camping ministry is unique. Young people spend a concentrated amount of time in a fun environment that can often push them out of their comfort zone, away from the familiar, giving them the opportunity to experience moments that can be life changing.

Izzy Chan is a First-Year Summit Program Trainee who, after attending her first CRU Holiday Camp when she was in Year 8, had her life forever changed. Izzy grew up in a non-Christian household and, after being invited to camp by a family friend, she heard the gospel message for the very first time.

She started attending a church with a friend from school and she attributes where she

is in her faith today to the discipleship that she received and the support of her church family alongside her.

Izzy has subsequently become a bit of a CRU Camps pro! "I've been on a lot of CRU Camps. 11 in fact — two Beach Blitz's, seven Brightwaters and two HSC Study Camps."

After finishing Year 12, Izzy decided to undertake the Summit Program — a place for young Christians to get equipped and trained, grow in faith and share Jesus with students on school camps.

"I was initially going to go straight to Uni after school and study primary teaching. But as



Izzy Chan, Summit Program Trainee

I researched all the different Christian post-school options but I realised I really wanted to do the Summit Program because I knew how much CRU had impacted me. I wanted to be someone God could work through to help others come to faith, just as He had used camps to bring me to faith.”

“I wanted to be someone God could work through to help others come to faith, just as He had used camps to bring me to faith.”

Izzy might have just been looking for a gap year program, but at Summit she has found so much more than that! She really appreciated being surrounded by a Christian community where she is receiving a solid Biblical grounding for her faith while also being trained in outdoor recreation and camping ministry.

“We have training days where we are abseiling and belaying people down a wall for a day. It’s so much more fun than just sitting in a classroom.”

When you speak with Izzy, it’s clear she carries a deep joy in being used by God to impact the next generation — just as CRU impacted her own life.

Izzy recounts a recent experience as a leader when she noticed a young girl sitting out on her own during an activity. After wandering over to check in on her, the conversation opened up about feelings of being an outcast and struggling to connect with friends. Izzy shared a little of her own struggles of seeking validation from others and the comfort of knowing that the Creator of the universe loves her so much that he sent His son Jesus to die for her. In that moment Izzy asked if she could pray for the young girl.

“She was crying as I was praying for her and when I finished, she looked so filled with peace and joy. Later that night she came up to me and said, ‘you know, when you prayed for

me earlier, I felt all the tension lifting off me. I felt like someone was holding me.”

At the end of camp, Izzy was able to give that student a Bible and a devotional which was received with a promise to read it and update how she went.



Campers exploring the Bible

Izzy shares that some of the many skills she has gained through Summit include greater confidence in talking with younger students and improved behaviour management.

“Summit is such a great program. I feel like they really push you out of your comfort zone and throw you in the deep end. But it’s so rewarding because you learn so many new skills as you train on the job and make a lot of new friends.”

Izzy firmly believes that the Summit Program has played a big role in the maturing of her faith. She has grown in her reliance on God, developed a deeper love for His Word and experienced the power of prayer many times.

“I’ve really enjoyed being focused and intentional in growing my faith at Summit this year and having the opportunity to tell others about Jesus. There’s no better place!”



To find out more about the Summit Program, visit
summitprogram.com.au



Jared Mills, teacher at Peter Moyes Anglican Community School

Planting Gospel Seeds

Meet one of the next generation of
seed-planters and see God the gardener at work

Meeet Jared Mills. He's 24 and in his first year of teaching at Peter Moyes Anglican Community School in Perth. He studied Political Science, International Relations and History at UWA before completing a Masters of Secondary Teaching. He enjoys playing sports, following Chelsea Football Club in the English Premier League (soccer), leading Years 7–9 youth at his church, and hanging out with friends and his border collie, Eko.

Jared has been involved with CRU West over the last 10 years and counting — attending his school CRU Group as a student, as a camper and then leader on CRU Camps, and now also as a teacher helping run his school's CRU Group.

We caught up with Jared to find out more about his history with CRU West, it's impact on his faith journey and how he's inspiring the next generation.

Camper

Jared grew up in Indonesia and Malaysia with his family before finishing high school in Perth. He attended some of the early CRU West camps in the holidays including Spring Leadership Camp (now called CrossTrain) in 2017 and 2018.

“CRU Camps helped me feel like I had a place where I belonged when I moved back from overseas. It helped me build friendships where Jesus was at the centre — super important

for me as a Year 9–12 student looking for meaning and purpose. The leaders always made me feel valued and noticed, something I didn't always feel at school at that time."

Leader

At the end of high school, Jared started leading on CRU West Camps, firstly as an Assistant Leader on CRU Quest and CRU West Study Camp, and subsequently on many, many CRU Camps as a fully qualified leader.

"I lead on CRU Camps because I'm convinced Jesus is worth living for. Spending a week encouraging and teaching kids about Jesus and that He's worth entrusting their lives to sounds like a pretty good use of time (and they're fun)! I hope to replicate the experience I had as a camper, with great leaders as role models, to the campers under my care now."



Jared as CRU Camp leader on "CRU Quest"

Leading on CRU Camps has also helped Jared to hone a range of skills which he has been able to use in other areas of life.

"CRU helps me develop practical skills which I use as a youth group leader at church or in my work as a teacher — writing a Bible study, writing and delivering talks, public speaking, working with high-school aged youth, and running games. It also helps shape the way I approach everyday conversations and encourages me to live openly and intentionally for Jesus wherever God places me."

Teacher

In Years 10 to 12, Jared attended his lunchtime CRU Group at school and found it very encouraging, especially as a new student in a new place.

Along with his experiences on CRU West Camps, Jared recognises the role CRU West played in him becoming a teacher. "I think CRU subtly pushed me in that direction! I had a constant stream of great role models on camp, many of whom happened to be teachers. CRU was one of those things that slowly led me to become a teacher."

Now, Jared helps run the CRU Group at Peter Moyes, alongside the School Chaplain and some other teachers.

"CRU Groups at school provide an opportunity to reach more kids with the gospel. Here, the Holy Spirit is helping kids grow in their knowledge of God, their love for Him, and their desire to follow Him. You can also continue discussions from Religious Education classes or answer questions they have.

"I see CRU Groups as a catalyst to encourage students to get involved in holiday camps or their local church or talk to their non-believing family or friends about Jesus."

Reflections on Growth

Jared is reminded of 1 Corinthians 3:6, "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow." He is encouraged to see kids being reached who haven't heard about Jesus yet and thankful for the role he plays in sharing the gospel with them. "CRU West provides safe spaces, away from distractions, where kids can hear God's Word, ask questions and find out about Jesus for the first time. What a great opportunity to plant Gospel seeds which God can grow."

"I lead on CRU Camps because I'm convinced Jesus is worth living for."



Lake Mac Stage 2 Construction Update

If only Dr Leslie Parr were here to see what the CRU Lake Mac campsite has become. What began in 1946 as a vision to create a place where young people could hear the good news of Jesus in a beautiful setting beside the lake has grown into a ministry reaching tens of thousands of young people each year.

We are delighted to share that Stage 2 of the Lake Mac redevelopment is progressing well and due to be ready for use early in 2027. We plan to hold an opening event in the first half of next year with details to follow.

We extend our sincere thanks to the generous supporters whose contributions enabled us to exceed our \$4.2 million fundraising goal. Thank you to all those who pledged including supporters who gave to our EOFY Appeal. The remaining \$9.5 million is to be covered through borrowings paid down from income in the coming years. Every dollar raised beyond the target helps us pay down the outstanding amount more quickly, releasing funds for further schools and camping ministry.

Overlooking the iconic jetty, Stage 2 includes a 104-bed accommodation lodge and the large Jetty View meeting room. These new buildings will make it possible for an additional 7,100 young people to come to Lake Mac and hear about Jesus each year.

Together with Stage 1, which was completed six years ago, the redevelopment will now

enable an extra 20,000 young people every year to encounter Christ on camp at Lake Mac!

Over the next 50 years, that represents more than one million additional young people hearing the good news of Jesus.

The redevelopment has always been about creating more opportunities for campers to hear the gospel, open the Bible, ask questions about faith, and experience Christian community.

Every new bed, every shared meal, and every gathering in these new spaces represents another opportunity for a young person to consider the hope found in Christ.

As construction moves toward completion, we thank God for His faithfulness and are forever grateful to the many supporters, volunteers, staff and prayer partners who have helped make this bold project possible.

Because of your generosity, generations of young people will have the opportunity to encounter Christ at Lake Mac for decades to come.



SAVE THE DATE
Saturday, 10th April 2027

Stage 2 celebration morning tea
and dedication at CRU Lake Mac.
More details to follow.

Above: The accommodation lodge and meeting room, August 2026



Hans & Kate Kristensen, Senior Pastor & Kids Pastor at Marsfield Community Church

Continuing Their Impact for Christ

Why Hans & Kate Kristensen left a gift to CRU in their Wills

There are some things we all mean to get around to but never quite do — cleaning out the garage, sorting through years of family photos, decluttering storage areas, or writing a Will. They sit quietly on our to-do list: never quite urgent enough for today but always important enough for “someday.”

Yet for one couple, Hans and Kate Kristensen, Pastors at Marsfield Community Church, attending a CRU Wills Day transformed that lingering intention into something practical, meaningful and encouraging.

“We’d been saying for a while that we really should have a Will,” Kate admits. “It was one of those things we’d do “one day” but we didn’t

really have any idea of where to start.” That changed with a simple invitation from CRU.

“It was the email,” she recalls. “Just the idea that we could come along, that it was free. It was the push we needed to finally do this and tick it off our list.”

At CRU Wills Days participants are guided through the legal process step by step by experienced professional solicitors. The result is an easy, helpful and supportive experience that removes uncertainty and replaces it with clarity.

For Hans and Kate, the day was more than just ticking off an important task. It also opened up deeper conversations — ones that can sometimes be difficult to begin.

“You don’t often have these sorts of conversations,” Kate says. “But it was really helpful to consider different situations and to be guided through those questions.”

Those questions go beyond finances or property. They gently prompt reflection on family and relationships. And for Hans, the relational impact matters most.

“I’ve seen families being ripped apart when a Will isn’t clear or up to date,” he explains. “For me, if this document serves to help divide whatever’s left in a way that keeps families loving each other, I think that’s really important.”

And for many Christians, this desire to care for those who come after us naturally extends to organisations and causes they’ve seen impacting lives for eternity firsthand.

Hans’ and Kate’s partnership with CRU has grown over the past four years, particularly through the CRU Ignite Day Camp run at their church.

“I’m thankful to CRU for CRU Ignite,” Hans shares. “It allows kids, some of whom are

from non-Christian backgrounds, to hear about Jesus, and their families to have a really positive experience with church. Our partnership with CRU has been amazing for our church and for the gospel and I’m not sure we’re going to get a vibe of how big CRU’s impact has been until we get to heaven.”

Kate agrees, highlighting not only the practical support CRU provides, but the wider vision. “I don’t see how our church could run something like this without CRU’s help. But it’s not just about running a successful event. It’s about reaching kids and families, equipping leaders, and setting people’s hearts on fire for mission. It’s something our whole church gets behind.”

“CRU partnering with us turns up the mission dial and takes what we could do from a five to a 10.” Hans says.

This first-hand experience shaped their decisions as they worked through their Wills.

“We want the small resources we’ve been able to accumulate in this life to have an eternal impact,” Hans continues. “So, for us, of all the



Hans & Kate on CRU Ignite Day Camp

groups we know, who do we trust? Who has the runs on the board? Who has made an impact? That's why we put CRU in our Wills."

"We want the small resources we've been able to accumulate in this life to have an eternal impact."

It wasn't about a grand gesture but about continuing what they're doing now. "It's a way," Kate reflects, "to continue to tell people about Jesus even after we're gone. We want to have as much impact for Christ as we can. That's the whole point of our lives."

This is a powerful motivation. A Will isn't just about distributing assets; it's an opportunity to express a desire for gospel mission and bring glory to God for generations to come. Through CRU Wills Days, this opportunity is presented gently and without pressure.

"I was surprised how easy the process was," Kate says. "And I think it's better to have conversations like this before it's too late."

For anyone who has been putting it off, their encouragement is simple: take the step.

CRU Wills Days provide an opportunity to offer practical help, expert guidance from professional solicitors, and a space to think about how you want to support not only your family but the generations that come after.

Because, in the end, a Will is more than a legal document. It's an expression of what matters most to you and, as Hans and Kate discovered, a quiet but powerful way to ensure they continue to make an eternal difference long into the future.



Invest in the next generation for Jesus

To find out about CRU Wills Days in November 2026, visit

cru.edu.au/wills

for available dates and locations.

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