



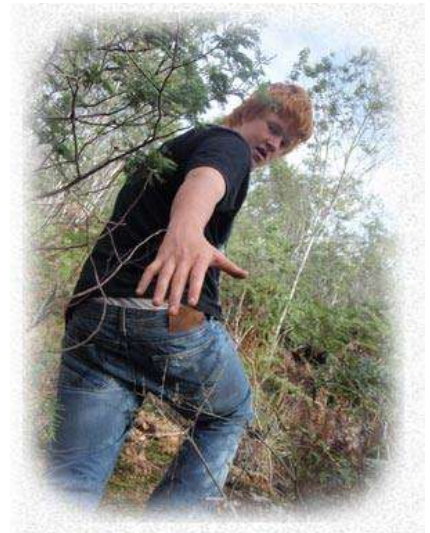
**SOAR ADVENTURES** AIMS  
TO EMPOWER BOYS IN EACH  
SECONDARY SCHOOL TO  
TURN THEIR LIVES AROUND  
TO LIVE WITH  
**PURPOSE, HOPE AND DIGNITY.**

## Welcome to SOAR Adventures

**SOAR Adventures** is a 12-month adventure based and experiential learning program that aims to empower Year 7 to 9 students in secondary schools. Originally an initiative of SU Victoria, this same program is now being offered to South Australian school students by SUSA.

**SOAR Adventures** takes on an intensive relational adventure philosophy; developing a connectedness that allows for open sharing. This is done through weekly in-school sessions, camps and on-going mentoring.

**SOAR Adventures** works closely with students who are at-risk of being excluded from their school, who are in conflict or crisis with their families or are suffering from depression or demoralisation. The program aims to promote positive life choices and decision-making amongst the participants, assisting to empower them to achieve their goals and full potential.



**SOAR Adventures** and the school team, believes that a personal sense of purpose, hope and dignity is a vital part in creating and sustaining strong communities within schools and families.

**YOU CAN BE INVOLVED!**

## Who We Are

**SOAR Adventures** is an initiative of **SU South Australia**. SU South Australia is part of Scripture Union International, a Christian not for profit volunteer organization that works with teams in over 130 countries around the world, aiming to make a real difference in local communities.

**SU South Australia** has been running programs in government schools for over 70 years. Ranging from primary to secondary schools, these programs seek to enhance school communities and the individual wellbeing and education of students. These programs include seminars on friendship, responding to issues of global poverty, role model selection; "The Hive" drop-in and education centre, lunch-time groups, camps and leadership programs.



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# Schools Programs

**SOAR Adventures** intensive twelve month adventure and experiential program is designed to work within a small group environment over an extended period to accomplish required tasks and safely engage in the framed camps and activities.



Physical challenges – such as rock climbing, abseiling, vocational experiences, hiking and ropes courses – provide opportunities for positive values to be integrated into action-based learning. Students learn by doing, reflecting and observing throughout. By the end of a 12 month period, the students have learned essential life skills that will then help them cope better with their school and home environment, developing positive life decisions.

Adventure-based counselling and experiential learning provides opportunities for students to listen to others' ideas, being offered and accepting leadership responsibilities, and becoming a member of a clearly identifiable team with clear-cut goals and tasks.

The elements outlined below are considered the essential elements of **SOAR Adventures** that make the program unique:

## 1. Psychological



**SOAR Adventures** aims to enhance and strengthen the self-image of the young people who participate in the program. "Self-image" is the way in which people view or perceive themselves, their attitudes, beliefs, feelings and personal expectations. An enhanced self-image will increase in self-confidence of the young people who participate. The program is conducted in such a way that students, even those with limited physical abilities, will experience success. Through participation, both young people and trainee leaders can increase their confidence in their ability to learn and achieve.

## 2. Sociological

**SOAR Adventures** aims to help young people develop their relationships and positive behaviours with others. This involves the development of their ability to communicate and cooperate with others; to respect others; and to act with compassion toward others. **SOAR Adventures** requires young people to work within a small group environment over an extended period to accomplish required tasks and safely engage in the camps and activities. This provides opportunities for listening to others' ideas, being offered and accepting leadership responsibilities, and becoming a member of a clearly identifiable team with clear-cut goals and tasks.



### 3. Educational



**SOAR Adventures** aims to take advantage of the many educational benefits that can be gained from participation in an adventure-based learning process. Students can develop a heightened sense of well-being through their achievements in increasingly challenging activities.

**SOAR Adventures** also aims to enhance the young person's abilities in goal setting, problem solving, conflict resolution, values clarification and environmental awareness. While many of these skills and processes are taught in classrooms, the outdoor environment introduces a different element of experience and application to the teaching situation.

In addition, participants are provided opportunities to clarify the distinction between needs and wants. **SOAR Adventure** camps amenities are often non-existent. Young people must prioritise what is actually needed and obtainable versus what they would like to have (i.e. a warm, soft bed; comfortable place to sit; watching T.V; a meal provided etc.)

### 4. Physical

**SOAR Adventures** aims to help young people benefit from increased fitness, skills, strength, coordination and balance. The very nature of the trips and activities conducted in the program require a degree of physical exertion and movement. Young people also learn the value of healthy eating patterns and the impacts of poor eating on physical performance.



### 5. Spiritual

In the context of **SOAR Adventures**, spiritual development is understood as an exploration into what is involved in becoming human. This exploration can happen as participants on the program develop relationships with themselves, other people, the world around them and God.



An important aim of **SOAR Adventures** is a development of spirituality - to provide opportunities for young people to formulate their own beliefs, while developing a sense of meaning and connectedness within the context of their relationships. The activities and temporary community living of **SOAR Adventures** camps have the potential to deal holistically with these relationships and presents a forum where all four relationships interact dynamically together.

## Testimonials

"There are a growing number of young people who are disconnected and disengaged with traditional school practice, and if they are not re-engaged they are at risk of falling through the cracks and dropping out of society"  
*Noel Claridge, Assistant Principal, Eaglehawk Secondary College.*

"Due to the high increase in single parent families; boys are left much to their own devices. They are often left with no male role models and therefore have no sense of belonging or connectedness. This in turn leads to greater risk-taking behaviour for young males who feel they have no hope or future. I believe SOAR is a program that can bring life-changing direction and hope."  
*Katie Sargent, Chaplain Weeroona College.*

"There has never been a greater need for a program like **SOAR Adventures** than now. Teaching staff are constantly challenged by the needs of these young boys and without such a program I can't see much of a hope for some of these boys".  
*Hayden Price, Chaplain/Youth Worker, Swan Hill College.*



## Contact Details

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#### FROM THE DIRECTOR:

After many years of adventure therapy study, research and experience working with young people in the outdoors, the SU SOAR Adventures team has developed an effective adventure-based intervention program for young males, aged 13-15 (year 7 to 9). At this specific age, students are faced with many crucial life decisions which have the capability of determining, shaping the direction and quality of their lives. These include such crossroad decisions as the use and availability of drugs, alcohol, abuse and violence, self-esteem issues and the transition from boyhood into manhood.

I once would have classified myself as an at-risk young man, asked to leave secondary school during year 10. However, with positive support, male role models and people who cared about the direction my life was heading, I was able to return to year 11 to complete VCE and go on to further post graduate study. I understand what it's like to be a young male faced with many difficult life decisions. I am extremely passionate about working closely with students and their families to equip them to make positive decisions and empower them to live purposeful lives.

We believe that the 'quality of the relationship; *between chaplains, the welfare team, SOAR facilitators and the boys in the program*, determines the weight of our influence!' Our long-term program with a small group of students enables us to have a strong and positive influence in their lives, often being the only people the students trust and discuss the deeper issues of life with. The SOAR outcome has a positive multiplication effect on the peers that directly surround the boys participating in SOAR Adventures.

We put the SOAR group into a 'unique situation, creating a state of disequilibrium through which the teaching of social responsibility and positive decision making can take place.' (Steffen, 2007) The SOAR Adventure based framework addresses the difficult issues that young people face in today's society; giving them a stronger sense of purpose, hope for a positive future and a strong sense of dignity.

Past programs have seen fantastic transformation in the lives of many young boys, their families and peers. The demand for the program is extremely high and opportunities for next year are limited. The SOAR team would love to work closely with your family to strengthen the family network that already exists!

I would welcome the opportunity to personally discuss this amazing program in more detail.

Brock Gravener *Bachelor Degree (Outdoor Education), Grad Dip Education (Secondary)*



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