



Gavin Vickers at the summit of Mount Everest.

Call for trekkers

This is a challenge for the brave.

Not-for-profit organisation The Umbrella Foundation is calling on participants to join its Everest Base Camp Challenge, led by Everest summiter and Hunter resident Gavin Vickers.

It's an opportunity to experience the mighty Himalayas and witness Mount Everest in all her splendid glory.

The 17-day trip includes 12 days of trekking, starting with the chance to join fellow Aussies at the Australian Embassy in Kathmandu for an Anzac Day ceremony on 25 April.

Trekkers will climb from Lukla to Monjo, Namche Bazaar, Thyangboche, Dingboche, Lobuche, Gorak Shep and, finally, reach Everest Base Camp.

Few men are more qualified than Mr Vickers to lead the trek.

The Umbrella Foundation Australia patron has climbed numerous other peaks, including Lhotse (8,516m), Lobuche East (6,000m), Ama Dablam (6,756m) and Cholatse (6,440m) in Nepal; Mt Cook (3,754m) and several other 3,000m-plus peaks in New Zealand; as well as Tibet's Mt Cho Oyu (8,201m).

All profits from this trek go directly to the foundation and will be used to build a school in Nepal as well as provide funds and sewing machines to set up micro businesses for women in the villages.

Email info@umbrellaaustralia.org or phone Linda on 0402 816 061 to enquire.

Playground revamp begins

Work will start this week on a \$125,000 revamp of Killingworth Playground, near Barnsley.

The first stage involves the demolition of the existing playground, which will then be replaced by modern, all-inclusive play equipment.

"The playground will feature a range of new equipment, such as swings, wave rider, typhoon spinner and more," Lake Macquarie council's section manager of community assets, Brendan Callander, said.

"Recreation areas and playgrounds are a central part of our community, providing places for children to play and for parents to meet and socialise with others."

The playground is expected to reopen in April, prior to the Easter holidays.

A Morisset playground is also set to reopen in April after a \$1.4 million upgrade, including children's play equipment, outdoor fitness stations and new public barbecues at Bernie Goodwin Memorial Park.

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