



heroes in red

Lydia and Samara are your go-to party people!

You'll find Lydia Prater, 22 and Samara Thambar, 23 in your hotel kitchen serving up a fresh batch of hot pancakes, contending for first place in a game of Mario Kart, or handing out frog lollies at a tent pitched next to the beach. These two legends are volunteers for Red Frogs and one of their jobs is to support, serve and safeguard the youth at Schoolies each year.

Schoolies (or leavers) is an Australian tradition of high school graduates having a week-long break following the end of their final exams. Students will typically holiday at beaches across the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Byron Bay, or go abroad – touching down in Kuta, Bali, or on Mana Island in Fiji; these are some of the locations you'll spot Red Frogs.

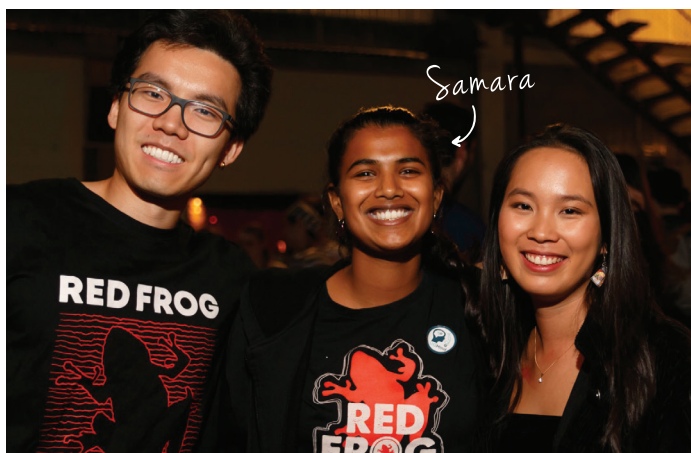
Lydia and Samara say the Red Frogs Crew have been the designated sober friend at Schoolies since 1997, so they know how to party safely. *"It's so important Red Frogs are on the ground,"* says Lydia. *"We come across girls walking home alone or people in gutters or the bushes. Had Red Frogs not been there, who knows what could have happened?"*

Schoolies would be a very scary place without the crew."

Samara says she's met a lot of young people who don't know what to do with their lives; they don't have direction or purpose, or they're doing something they think they have to. *"When you finish high school, it can be a rough time. You close*

the door on what you know to be your everyday. That's when I can reassure them. I've talked to so many kids who want to do medicine or are worried they won't get in. I'm studying medicine myself, so they're things I've experienced. I get to share my story with them. It's an honour!"

The whole heart behind Red Frogs is unconditional love, no matter the situation a young person finds themselves in, Lydia says. *"For some of them, they haven't experienced that before, so they're usually baffled or confused. If they're throwing up in a toilet bowl and you're there holding up their hair, comforting them, they're like, 'Why are you helping me? I don't deserve this!' We're able to say, 'You do. You deserve all the love in the world.'"*



When Lydia and Samara are not taking serious calls, they're lifting the mood at parties, playing games of UNO or Celebrity Heads, or lending a hand with clean-up. *"On one of the last nights, a group of guys asked for our help with clean-up, so we swung by their room. They had a kilo of bacon sitting in the fridge and were like, 'You guys want some bacon?' Half an hour later, we were eating bacon sandwiches they'd fried up and made. It was so nice! Another group we met demanded we let them make us pancakes. It was awesome!"* says Samara.

If you're heading to Schoolies this year (or invited to a party), here are Lydia and Samara's red-hot tips:

1. Hop on over to a Red Frogs tent, grab some lollies and get the crew to walk you home every night.
2. Watch out for your mates. Go everywhere in pairs, even if you're ducking out to the shops. You're never too old for the buddy system.
3. Stock the fridge/pantry. Make a big batch of pasta – something to last the week.
4. Stay hydrated and eat before you go out (energy drinks don't count).
5. Slip. Slop. Slap. Don't be that person who gets third-degree burns on the second day.
6. Be smart about who you let into your room.
7. If you feel unsafe or in a position where you could be making a poor decision, get in touch with Red Frogs or an adult you trust.
8. Don't compromise who you are just to make someone else happy. It's OK to say no.
9. Never leave drinks alone and never accept drinks from others. Spiking is prevalent.
10. Familiarise yourself with safety services. High-five a cop or say g'day!
11. Save the Red Frogs hotline number in your phone (1300 557 123) and download the app. You can book the crew in for pancakes or request songs at the beach party.
12. Have fun. You've worked hard for a long time. Just do it safely!