



Scholarship helps Ben get better by degrees

TERRY COLLINS

AT the age of 14, Ben Ellis was enjoying school, jogging and running regularly and just about to start his 11th season of playing soccer.

Seeking medical advice because of increasing sleepiness and sickness, he was staggered to be diagnosed with hodgkins lymphoma, a cancer of the lymph nodes and blood.

"It was a huge shock - I was in a daze for quite a while," said Mr Ellis, of Berkeley Vale, now 19.

"I spent six months at Westmead Children's Hospital undergoing chemotherapy but luckily mine wasn't the most aggressive form of the disease and we caught it early."

For the past two years he has been in remission and is now in his second year of an environmental science and management degree at Newcastle Uni-

versity.

"It's funny but being sick actually led to my interest in the sciences," he said.

"I really enjoyed learning about the technical side of my treatment.

"I'd always had a passion for animals so I decided environmental science would combine the two. I have since decided to specialise in marine biology and now split my time between the Newcastle and Ourimbah campuses."

The keen sportsman said it was hard to get back into structured sport with the time constraints of uni, but he attended a gym twice a week and was running every day.

"You really take your body for granted until you lose all the things you didn't realise were there," he said.

For Mr Ellis, going to uni

would have been much more difficult without the help of a Redkite scholarship.

The scholarship, available for people aged 16-24 who have had cancer at some time in their lives, has so far provided Mr Ellis with \$1500, all of which has gone towards buying text books for his studies.

"Textbooks are so expensive," he said.

"A lot of my friends struggle to buy them throughout the year, but thanks to the scholarship I have been able to start each year with a full complement of texts.

"These books have helped open my mind to the impacts humans have had on the environment and have steeled my resolve to make it my goal to assist in fixing these problems.

"I can't say enough about how wonderful Redkite is."



Ben Ellis has been awarded a Redkite scholarship to help him study for an environment degree.

Picture: TROY SNOOK

at a glance Redkite helps

APPLICATIONS OPEN:

Applications for Redkite scholarships for people 24 and under who have had cancer will be accepted until July 5.

AMOUNTS: There is one \$5000 national scholarship, six \$2000 state scholarships, 12 high commendations of \$1000 and 12 encouragement awards of \$500.

INQUIRIES: redkite.org.au.