The Odyssey Trip

In the early hours of Saturday 13th June after a fright and a quick phone call as one student thought we were flying the next night, 36 Year Eleven students and 5 staff embarked on their 10-day Odyssey trip through Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne.

On arriving in Sydney we met our professional and extremely knowledgeable driver, David, and after a hearty pancake breakfast headed off to the Sydney Eye, Madame Tussauds and the Sydney Aquarium. A ferry ride across to Manly and a bus ride to our Naamaroo accommodation completed the day.

Sunday Mass at St Kevin’s, which is an Odyssey tradition, was followed by a day at Taronga Zoo. The evening was spent at FXZONE where the teachers relived their childhood, trampolining, playing soccer and batting against a pitching machine. The students also did these events however weren’t as sore the next day!

An exhilarating Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb started the Monday, followed by a cruise around the harbour, an informative and interactive experience at Hyde Park Barracks (some students were very content to stay sleeping in the convict hammocks) and a visit to the Sydney Observatory where due to the inclement weather we looked at the Luna Park face instead of stars through the telescope. The day finished on a high as Mr Fleming found his wedding ring, which he thought had been lost at the Sydney Harbour Bridge, at the bottom of his bag.

Tuesday was spent travelling to chilly Canberra with some hilarious Mini Olympics games to finish the day. It is amazing how a stocking and two tennis balls can cause so much laughter.

Our visit to Parliament House the next day was made extra special by Natasha Griggs getting members to wave to us from the chamber and bending some rules to allow the students to visit her office (a new record for the amount of people in a Parliamentarian’s office was achieved). After a visit to the National Archives and National Gallery we headed home by driving past the Embassies, with special excitement shown by Mr Katal and Matina for the PNG and Greece embassies respectively.

Our day in the snow ended up being a day in the sleet as misty rain settled in for the day and the students discovered their waterproof pants weren’t so waterproof after they had laid down in the snow. Maybe that spare pair of clothes might have been a good idea after
all! Snowball fights and tobogganing still were fun and the breakfast (& coffee!!!) at Nuggets Crossing was especially welcome after the 4:30am start.

Friday saw us visiting the AIS, where we farewelled Kaitlyn to spend quality time with her sister, the National Museum, learning about the Electoral system and enrolling to vote at National Electoral Education Centre and the National War Museum where we met up with Mr Aylott who is working there whilst on a year’s leave from O'Loughlin. Kelsea and Bronson laid a wreath at the Last Post Ceremony with the rest of the students as a guard of honour which was live streamed to the War Memorial website so check us out on 19th June. Ice skating that night saw some classic spills and falls with some frantic holding onto the wall or a friend for balance.

The next day was our big drive to Melbourne. An amazing dumpling dinner at one of Mrs McNeill’s special places was followed by watching the Rocky Horror Picture Show with lots of raucous laughing occurring.

Mass at St Mary’s Star of Sea Cathedral was followed by the Amazing Race around Melbourne. Our group then split with some taking the long (and even longer when they lost) trip to Geelong with the Katal’s to see Mrs Katal’s beloved Cats play Melbourne. The rest of the group went to the visually stunning Lion King production.

Our last day saw the students unleashed on the Melbourne shops and after a pizza dinner we headed back wearily to Darwin.

I would like to personally thank the students for their exemplary behaviour; our driver David Bruce for his professionalism; Mo Mara, Peta Strategos and Kerry Chester for their assistance in organising the trip; the Australian Federal Government through their PACER program for providing some funding for the Canberra leg and to the staff Kerryn Katal, John Katal, Joanne Gleeson, Narelle McNeill that attended for their support, guidance and care.

Paul Fleming

Acting Year 11 Team Leader