

Meriden girls help 'Keep the Fire Burning'

Year 11 Cultural Immersion

Towards the end of the holidays, several Year 11 students embarked on a transformative and powerful immersion trip to our partner schools in the Northern Territory.

Upon arrival in Alice Springs, staff and students took the two-hour drive north to Ti Tree, the location of one of our partner schools. The other, in Neutral Junction, is a further hour's drive north.

Staff and students spent the week staying in the Ti Tree school gym and one night camping out under the stars.

The students woke on Monday morning to meet some very excited students from Ti Tree School and members of the Six Mile and Station communities. Each day, the students split into two groups, with one staying at Ti Tree and the other traveling to Neutral Junction. Our students engaged in meaningful educational experiences working in classrooms. The schools welcomed them, eager to share their knowledge and benefit from the perspectives that our students brought with them.

The girls assisted the teachers at both schools each day. Every day was hands-on, allowing them to work alongside the children from these remote communities and learn from a new environment. We saw the Meriden girls and the Ti Tree and Neutral Junction students learning from each other in a beautiful way.

We had the privilege of learning from Community Elders in a range of cultural experiences, including traditional art and the importance of on-Country learning. Under the guidance of Aunty April Campbell, we learned about the significance of Dreamtime stories and the intricate symbols used in Aboriginal art. These learning experiences offered students an intimate view into the timeless traditions that continue to shape Aboriginal communities today.

The interaction with local staff and students was a highlight of the trip. Our students quickly formed bonds with their Northern Territory peers, sharing stories and experiences that transcended their geographic and cultural differences. They collaborated on projects, participated in group discussions, and even joined in on recreational activities, creating lasting friendships.

The dedicated local teachers and staff were instrumental in making the immersion experience enriching and memorable. They provided invaluable insights into educational challenges within their schools, helping our students understand the broader context of their work and contributions.

Towards the end of the trip, the students were able to do some sightseeing, including a drive to the breathtaking rocks of Karlu Karlu (Devils Marbles).



The group from Meriden at Ti Tree School



At Neutral Junction School

The students and staff returned to Sydney with a wealth of experiences and insights. The immersion trip had not only broadened their understanding of Aboriginal culture and the educational landscape of the Northern Territory but also fostered personal growth and a greater sense of empathy.

This journey was more than just a travel experience; it was a transformative adventure that highlighted the importance of cultural appreciation, community engagement, and the power of education. As our students touched down back in Sydney, they did so with a renewed perspective and a collection of memories that would undoubtedly shape their future endeavours.



Students learning together about Aboriginal art with Aunty April

I would like to thank the other staff involved in this trip: Mrs Jessica Chilton, Mrs Fiona Brennan and Miss Ji Mee Lee.

NAIDOC Week 2024: Keeping the Fire Burning

As we embrace NAIDOC Week 2024, the theme “Keep the Fire Burning” invites us to celebrate and reflect on the rich cultural heritage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This year, Meriden embarked on a range of engaging activities to deepen our understanding of Aboriginal culture.

Various subject areas designed engaging activities to immerse students in Aboriginal culture and history.

Year 8 Ceramics studied the Hermannsburg Potters and created their own masterpieces based on their study.

Our library was a hub of activity, featuring resources and programs focused on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. A curated collection of books by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors was on display, providing diverse perspectives on their experiences and stories.

Students hosted interactive Storytime sessions featuring books written by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Students were also able to attend sessions to begin learning some sign language in Anmatjere language.

Chapels during the week encompassed the theme through songs and an inspiring talk from Mr Lennon Wingfield.

NAIDOC Week was a time for all of us to come together and celebrate the rich cultural tapestry of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. By participating in these activities, we not only honour their heritage but also learn and grow together. Meriden embraced NAIDOC Week with enthusiasm and respect, and, as the theme suggests, we will continue to “Keep the Fire Burning.”

Mrs Jenny Greenhalgh

Coordinator of Learning Link – Cultural Connections



Mr Lennon Wingfield at Chapel



Pottery on display in Wallis Auditorium