

Year 11 Ti Tree Immersion Camp report

In the first week of Term 3, thirteen Year 11 students travelled to Ti Tree in the Northern Territory for a weeklong immersion experience. The program offered students the opportunity to engage with remote schools, connect with local communities, and explore the cultural and natural landscapes of Central Australia.

The group departed Sydney early on Sunday morning and flew into Alice Springs. After collecting supplies, they visited Simpson's Gap, a striking gorge framed by red cliffs and clear water. From there, they travelled north to Ti Tree School, where they set up camp in the school hall and were warmly welcomed by Fluffy, the school dog.

Throughout the week, students divided their time between Ti Tree School and Neutral Junction School. The Year 11 students supported classroom activities such as reading and writing, while also joining in games including soccer, dodgeball, and AFL, which proved a fun way to build connections with the younger students.

A highlight of the immersion was a cultural learning session with Assistant Teacher Emma, who explained the significance of Aboriginal skin names and their connection to identity, totems, and ceremonies. Each student was invited to select a skin name, which helped deepen their understanding of Aboriginal culture.

The group also camped overnight near the school, sharing stories and songs around a campfire before stargazing under the exceptionally clear night sky. Another day was spent at Hanson River, a culturally significant site where students engaged in painting, learnt about traditional medicinal uses for various plants and enjoyed kangaroo tail and roast vegetables prepared in an earth oven under the watchful eye and skill of some local elders.

On their final full day, the group visited the Devil's Marbles (Karlukarlu), a heritage-listed site renowned for its immense balancing boulders. This visit provided a chance to explore one of the region's most iconic landscapes before returning to Alice Springs and beginning the journey home.

The Ti Tree immersion was a memorable and rewarding experience that allowed students to develop cultural awareness, strengthen their connections with others, and appreciate life in a remote community. It was an invaluable opportunity for personal growth and shared learning that will stay with them long after returning home.

Mr Luke Mottee
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