

Canberra 2022 - By Georgia Baird

MONDAY

6:15am. That's the time my parent's car pulled up outside the school on Monday the 10th of October. Little did anybody know that this would be the longest, most grueling bus trip of my life! We all boarded the bus at 6:45, eager to get on the road. As we approached Narrabri we turned onto Turrawan Road only to find floodwaters blocking our path. The bus began driving backwards on the road as we couldn't turn around. Eventually, we arrived at St Francis Xaviers School Narrabri and loaded the students onto two buses: Bus 1 and Bus 2 (the Boggabri bus)

The first part of the journey was long and tedious until we arrived at Dunedoo for recess. What we didn't know was that in two hours we would return to that exact location. As we began to make our way out of Dunedoo our bus driver Dennis decided to go to Canberra another way as our current route was blocked by floodwaters. So we turned around and headed back to go to Dubbo/Wellington. Two hours later we came across a sign: **ROAD CLOSED**. We couldn't believe it! Luckily for us there was another alternate route however this would add another 4 and a half hours onto the trip. At around eight at night we had the beautiful nutritious meal of Macca's as everyone had passed out with tiredness on the bus.

By the time we arrived at Canberra Student Lodge it was ten thirty at night! Hazily, we were put into cabins after our 16 and a half hour DRIVE!!! As soon as our heads hit the pillows we were out cold!

TUESDAY

The next day the teachers woke us up at 6:30! Whoa! After our massive night we were zombies as we slumped down to the breakfast hall, letting the delicious aromas of bacon and eggs guide our bodies. After a speedy breakfast our first stop of the day was the Australian Mint where we got to see firsthand the beautiful art of coin making. With the help of our tour guide we were transported into the history of Australian coins from colonisation to now. The rest of the day was a blur as we explored the

- National Film and Sound Archives
- A driving tour of the Embassy and Lodge Districts
- Old Parliament House
- The Museum of Australia
- National Electoral Education Centre

Before stopping at a local food court for a quick dinner before we made our way to the cinemas for a very special screening of Super Pets.

By the time we arrived home at the Student Lodge it was well after 9:30. As we had all gotten to know each other throughout the day it felt more comfortable and relaxed unlike the slightly more tense night we had the day before.

WEDNESDAY

On Wednesday morning my cabin mates (Nina, Anthea, Ruby, Johanna aka Joey, Mia, Olivia and Felicity) woke up at dusk excitedly preparing ourselves for the colossal day ahead. We began the day with a relaxing trip to Mount Ainslie lookout where everyone enjoyed the stunning views in front of us.

We then set off to visit Reconciliation Place before going to Questacon!!! Questacon was the clear favourite of ALL the students because of its spectacular exhibits and amazing gift shop. The earthquake lab and the Freefall at Questacon was definitely the highlight.

We then made our way to my personal favourite location... Parliament House! Our tour guide took us through the House of Representatives and the Senate. Afterwards we got to do a role play if a bill was to be passed through the House of Representatives. I was honoured with the role of Speaker so my job was to keep order in the court and also lead the hearing. We were then taken to a small room for afternoon tea and we were in awe at the large LEGO structure of Parliament House by the one and only... Brickman! The whole thing took over 744 hours!

We then returned to the Lodge for a delicious dinner of chicken drumsticks, scallops and roast veggies. All of us then changed into more comfortable clothing for a night of gaming at iPlay Belconnen. After about an hour and a half of gaming we all were tucked into bed. All of my friends and I talked for hours about all the amazing events that unfolded throughout the day.

THURSDAY

On our final day in Canberra we first went to the AIS (Australian Institute of Sport) and attended their Sportex program which included simulators of almost every Olympic Sport including a podium for taking pictures! We then departed the AIS (with a quick trip to the gift shop of course!) and went to the

- National Gallery of Australia
- Australian War Memorial

- Lunch at the Botanic Gardens
- National Arboretum Canberra

Then finally the piece de resistance of the day was... the Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre! This was everyone's favourite stop because of their gigantic slide!

Once we were all wet and freezing we departed the pool and had a warm dinner at the Lodge before sleeping in our cabins for the final time.

FRIDAY

Our cabin was up bright and early at 5:00! A whole half an hour before the teachers did their annual wake up call. Once we were all dressed and prepared we set off at 7:30 with Boggabri in our sights. With a definite route in our heads this time there were no detours thankfully! We finally arrived at Sacred Heart around ten to six exhausted and ready for a homemade meal! Overall if I had to do this excursion again I definitely would!