



Indigenous Immersion Reflections

Ten days away from home, surrounded by the raw Australian outback and such very kind-hearted people... there was no better way to spend the September holidays!

The Siena and Sion College's Indigenous Immersion cultural trip was an incredibly eye-opening and insightful experience and from the word „go“ it was a trip to remember! We jumped onto the aeroplane at Melbourne airport and from that point on, the Siena and Sion students all got along really well. We stayed at many different places while in Central Australia, one of my favourite places being Yipirinya School – a school for aboriginal children from pre-school to Year 12. We spent two days with the students there, working and playing with them. Another special moment for me was doing the King's Canyon Rim walk – the rocky landscape was incredible and the views were amazing! On par with the Kings Canyon experience was when Audrey and Gloria (two of our aboriginal guides) took us digging for honey ants – a traditional aboriginal bush tucker food. We helped them dig up the red earth to get to the insects and about one metre beneath the surface we found the honey filled ants, their bulbous abdomen a shining golden brown colour. They tasted very sweet and were delicious.

Overall, it was an amazing trip because all the students formed close bonds and so we all didn't want to go home. I would strongly advise any other student looking for a rich cultural experience to partake in this amazing trip.

I'd go back and do it again any day!

Dana Hamilton Yr 11

As soon as I heard about the indigenous Immersion trip I was eager to experience it, so after I handed in the application form, and went to the interview I was told the good news - I was in! On that exact day I started my countdown to the 22nd of September - the day we were to leave. We finally boarded the plane and it was all beginning to seem real! We touched down in Alice Springs and it was like living in a different world. It was so different to the chilly weather back in Melbourne! We explored the outback for about six days until on day seven we arrived at Kings Canyon . As we walked on and on I realised that it would be one of the most amazing things I had ever seen and experienced, especially when we were told that the beautiful water sitting at the bottom of the canyon was open for us to swim in! It turns out that the Kings Canyon walk was definitely one of the highlights of the Indigenous trip for me, and I'm sure it was for other girls as well.

On the 2011 indigenous immersion trip I made friendships that will last me a lifetime, and memories that I will never forget. It is something I recommend to everyone with a love for our country, our home, our Australia.

Mel Pearson Yr 9

The Indigenous Immersion was the trip of a lifetime. We saw amazing sights, met amazing people and made amazing friends. The teachers are all fantastic and Jungala, our tour guide, was great! We all became really close friends with the Sion girls and everybody had a great time. Definitely a life changing experience. Loved it!

Grace Holland Yr 10



As I boarded the plane to Alice Springs, with the twenty nine other members of our trip, I wasn't really sure what to expect but I knew that this would be an incredible experience. We had an amazing ten days, experiencing things such as staying at an Indigenous school, helping out in the classrooms with the gorgeous students, eating honey ants, participating in a traditional smoking ceremony, visiting an Indigenous Art gallery and the Alice Springs Court, going on beautiful scenic walks around Uluru, Kings Canyon, Ormiston Gorge and Ochre Pits, and most importantly, learning about Aboriginal culture and history. I loved every single second of the Immersion trip. All the girls from Sion were really nice, and it was great making new friends. We all know that we will be friends forever and have fantastic memories from the trip for the rest of our lives. It was really eye opening learning about Aboriginal culture and seeing the way that they are keeping their culture strong today and some of the difficulties they are facing. I would recommend the Indigenous Immersion trip to everyone. It really was a life changing experience and I wish I could do it all over again! **Josephine Hesse**

The Indigenous Immersion experience is the greatest thing I have experienced since coming to Siena. The trip brought the group of twenty four Siena and Sion girls closer to the Indigenous community and each other. As a Year 9 student on this trip, I did not feel I was unwelcome or pushed away by any of the older girls which made the trip even better. Even though we didn't become best friends straight away, there was no barrier between the two schools and many people went home with new friends to catch up with. I found that often when the tour guide, Jungala, brought us to sacred places, we embraced the surroundings. We touched, smelled, saw and felt the land spiritually.

The Aboriginal culture is an amazing culture to learn about as it is Australia's own. In the city you don't have many opportunities to view and taste bush tucker and nature's medicines. The Indigenous people showed us these things throughout the long hikes, when searching for honey ants, short walks and around the base of Uluru. I was excited to see Uluru because it is famous, but I don't believe it would have had the impact it did if we did not get to take in the knowledge from Vincent, our tour guide. He drew us creation stories in the sand and shared with us the bush medicines around Uluru. I have a whole new view on Aboriginal culture and have taken so much away from this experience. The Aboriginal people were the kindest and most generous people who have now become our friends for life.

Katherine Viti