

# Oxley's African inspiration

BY VICTORIA LEE

AN EYE-OPENING trip will now be a permanent part of the Oxley College school calendar.

Ten students from Years 10 and 11 flew to Botswana for a safari trip with an educational focus.

Teachers Peter Craig and Rani Ritchie accompanied the students on safari and were later joined by headmaster Michael Parker.

During the second half of the 15-day trip, the students formed a connection with schools in the town of Maun.

Oxley will carry out ongoing service and learning trips with Mathibe Primary School and Sedie Junior Secondary School to assist African students with their English and literacy skills.

Year 11 student D'Arcy Deitz said the experience helped him to form his own connections.

"Being in a small group and sleeping in tents every night brought me closer to people [from Oxley] I hadn't talked to before," he said.

"We had afternoon tea at some of the students' houses



**ABROAD HORIZONS:** Year 10 Oxley College students Amelia O'Sullivan, Tom Lloyd and Brad Worthington said they learnt a great deal from their trip to Botswana.

and it was very interesting to discover major differences in culture, tradition and what is and isn't accepted in their community."

Amelia O'Sullivan, who had previously travelled to

Singapore and New Zealand, said the culture in Africa was unlike anything she had experienced.

"The culture is really different there, the kids have a lot of expectations on them



**LEARNING ABOUT AFRICAN CULTURE:** Students enjoy a dinner in Botswana on their 15-day safari and educational trip. Photo: supplied.



Oxley College students work on English and literacy activities with students from Mathibe Primary School in Maun. Photo: supplied

and there's a lot of importance put on knowing about HIV/AIDS," she said.

Rani Ritchie said the town they all visited was equipped with a HIV/AIDS clinic, and although there was a very

high prevalence of the disease, the outbreak had been controlled and the townspeople no longer had HIV/AIDS-related deaths.

"It was interesting for our students to see how signif-

icant the issue was for under-18s there and how aware students were of the issue," she said.

Oxley student Tom Lloyd said the issue had implications for African teenagers.

"Families are strict because of the problems and they're not allowed to have boyfriends or girlfriends. If they do and they get caught, they can be suspended or expelled from school," he said.

"I even thought it was interesting that after a certain age, girls aren't allowed to play sport or even go horse riding because they have strict expectations on them about their education."

Brad Worthington said dinner time was something that made him think twice about how lucky he'd been to grow up in Australia.

"They were amazed at our portion sizes when we dished up our dinners," he said. "They looked at our plates and said there was no way they'd eat that much, and they were shocked if we didn't eat it all."

Oxley will now hold the trip to Botswana in September each year.

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