

RITEs OF PASSAGE



INDEPENDENT

UNIT TALKS

SENSE OF
DIRECTION

On Sunday 4 June 2017, Year 9 headed up on the train to Sydney for their three week Rites of Passage trip to Sydney with the purpose of strengthening friendships, gaining independence and developing our own personal identity. No one had any idea how much this experience would enrich our understanding of life after Oxley as well as giving us a strong sense of direction for the future. Even fewer believed that this Rites of Passage would finally bring our year together, but it did. Activities like climbing the Harbour Bridge, camping on Cockatoo Island in the lashing rain, and the thrilling jet boat ride helped us come together as a year group and bonded us with people we'd hardly ever talked to. Whether it was racing around the city for the scavenger hunt or travelling on public transport, it all gave us the opportunity to make new connections. We were often separated from our closest friends and put into groups with new people. When taken out of the classroom scenario it turned

out some people were completely different than you thought. We had fascinating visits to most of the Sydney universities including the National Institute of Dramatic Art, University of Sydney, Macquarie University, University of New South Wales, Australian Film and Television School and the University of Technology Sydney. We learnt about exciting innovative courses that many of us had never heard of, and how to apply after the HSC. The whole trip was amazing, but most of Year 9 would agree highlights were the bridge climb, the jet boat ride, watching people from our year ask questions in the ABC studio on Q and A, Art After Hours and the spectacular Kinky Boots. We would like to thank Mrs Tregenza and everyone who helped make Rites of Passage happen. It was a life changing experience we will never forget.

By Gracie Phelan



"I got closer to figuring out what I want to do after school."

The Rites of Passage programme continues to receive tremendous, positive feedback from Year 9 students and their parents. Firstly, the students comment that the world seems so much bigger and full of opportunities than they ever imagined but so much smaller because, having learned how to travel independently by public transport, they know they can easily access it. We also hear from so many students who find a university they would love to go to; whether it's Macquarie University with its beautiful leafy, open campus and groovy modern buildings, the highly urban environment of UTS and the spectacular digital data arena or the gracious sandstone of University of Sydney, the university experiences rate as one of the most valuable aspects of the trip. As Alexander Kolovos declared the Mathematics lecture at UTS the very best thing on Rites of Passage (and that is comparing it to Kinky Boots, a Bridge Climb and a Jet Boat ride) we couldn't help but celebrate that Rites of Passage had really hit the mark in terms of connecting students to future educational opportunities.

We worked hard on expanding the friendship groups within the year by using fluid groupings, clustering students differently over the course of the trip and then sharing the highs and the challenges together. That long trek to a rainy, cold Cockatoo Island was a challenge for all of us this year but the opportunity to support each other to build and demonstrate resilience was so valuable. Many students spoke about feeling a greater sense of trust and connection across the year.

Our theme of learning about identity at each of the institutions we visit stimulates big questions for students. When we originally put the programme together, we

expected students would develop a more definite sense of who they are but we have been delighted to see a much more sophisticated awareness that identity is a fluid rather than fixed concept and we are always "becoming" ourselves. Students gain a greater sense of comfort with diversity and individuality. They develop a critical view of how and by what their beliefs and views are being shaped and their expectation of personal development and change fits well with the growth mindset that is so beneficial for learning.

A short film of our trip, produced by Australian Film, Television and Radio School should be available next week and we will post it online. We also have several film workshops and editing sessions for students later in August. The film making process is partly about the film product and building editing skills but perhaps the more important aspect of that process is the chance to view and remember all the amazing things that happened in just three short, wonderful weeks. It's a very full programme and the students go from one experience to the next in quick succession. They are caught up in each moment. This final phase of Rites of Passage is so important; as students sit for hours, picking through the footage and piecing together the story they would like to tell, they revisit that time, consolidate memories and construct meaning.

During our final night picnic, I read a list of compliments to Year 9 2017. It was two pages long. They are very fine young men and women and now wiser and more resilient because they wholeheartedly embraced all that Rites of Passage had to offer.

By Bronwyn Tregenza



[Rites of Passage Blog](#)
Password: adventure



Dimity Dietz
The best memory from ROP that I have is probably when ten of us who went up to Vivid one night and got to do a canon workshop. The canon workshop included some canon workers who taught us how to take pictures using canon cameras, especially photos of Vivid. We went up to an exclusive area that had an amazing view of the Sydney Harbour and all the light shows. Coming out of ROP I feel like I know my way around Sydney way better and that I could get myself anywhere in Sydney using public transport and feel comfortable and know what I am doing. Being with my year group for three weeks brought me out of my comfort zone and opened me up to new opportunities and what I can do in life in the future, it also brought me closer to people I haven't really talked to before and now I feel closer to my year. It opened my eyes to the opportunities that you have access to after leaving school.

Claudia Fair
The best memories from Rights of Passage were going to see Kinky Boots, Cyrano de Bergerac, and Half of Mr Burns. I also really enjoyed going to Macquarie University because it opened up what I want to do once I finish school. Nida, the Bridge Climb and the Jet Boat Ride were also really fun.

Being in Sydney for three weeks with my friends opened up new friendships.

Thom Jackson
I really enjoyed the uni talks especially the science ones. Now I want to do engineering.

Anonymous
We gave some food to homeless people and the look of gratitude on their face is something I'll never forget.

Anonymous
I feel independent, and have a strong sense of direction for the future; my views of things have changed and Rites of Passage was an experience I'll never forget.

Anonymous
I came away from Rites of Passage with a new connections and a new perspective on life.

"It opened my eyes to the opportunities that you have access to after leaving school."

