

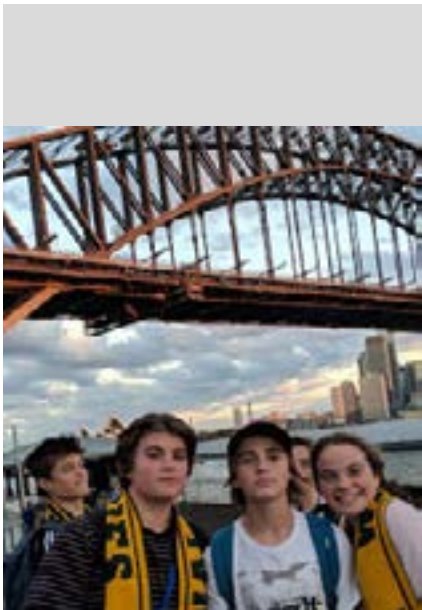
rites of passage

TAKE EVERY
chance

INDEPENDENT

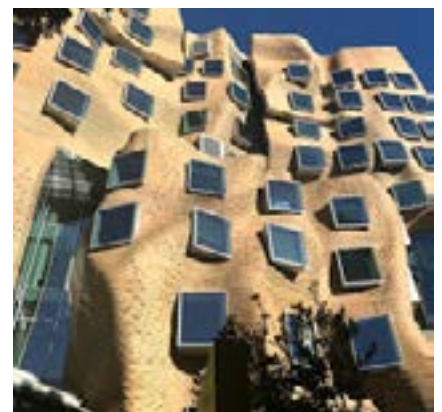
UNIVERSITIES
+
INSTITUTIONS

ADVENTURE



Rites of Passage 2018, what a memorable experience for all year 9 students. As I only joined Oxley College in Term 2 this year, Rites of Passage was definitely something I, and my fellow year group looked forward to. The weeks leading up to Rites of Passage we were all very excited and couldn't wait to get on the train to set off for our big adventure! With three weeks in Sydney we squeezed in so many activities and eye opening opportunities such as going to NIDA to study the art of drama, visiting the Museum of Human Disease, learning how to film and edit at AFTRS, watching amazing performances at theatres, going to multiple art galleries and climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge. These were few of the many wonderful experiences we were fortunate to have completed whilst on Rites of Passage. Rites of Passage has helped us to find our true identity as well as giving us a taste in the real world. We have all gained a sense of direction as to where we want to be when we are older and what career we are thriving to pursue. Rites of Passage has opened our minds and we can't wait to get into the big wide world to continue our journey.

- Claudia Thompson





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

Parent and student feedback after 2018 Rites of Passage has been delightful. While the programme was carefully built on a rigorous theoretical framework with learning experiences crafted to bring about pre-determined learning outcomes, it is always still a thrill for staff to hear the accounts from students and their parents about just how much they have grown.

Year 9 2018 excelled in their mastery of Sydney's public transport system, using Moovit and Tripview apps on their phones to plan journeys and find bus stops, platforms and wharves. The few occasions when we had to split a group across buses or train services because of the volume of peak hour commuters, our students were perfectly comfortable taking the journey independently. Our day one scavenger hunt is designed to make sure everyone knows what to do and most of the routes are familiar and students operate with often invisible support systems around them, ensuring they succeed safely. They are now capable navigators, able to travel safely and independently anywhere in the Sydney Metro area. More important than the skills they demonstrated is the sense of self-belief and empowerment that comes with this new capability.

Each year the programme changes a little based on the exhibitions and performances being staged at the major galleries and theatres. Perhaps one of the most thrilling evenings for students was a performance by an edgy, contemporary music group called Haiku Hands at the Art Gallery of NSW as part of the Art After Hours programme. After viewing the Archibald Prize exhibition, students were invited to dance in front of the stage with pumping music and coloured lights. As we departed the Art Gallery for a night walk back through the city to the hotel, students described it as "the best experience of my life". The most satisfying outcome was the students' belief that public institutions like AGNSW are exciting places full of wonder and joyful expression. During the evening, the Director of Public Programmes at the gallery approached the teachers with questions about how it might be possible to encourage all schools to participate in the way that Oxley College does.

Another extraordinary opportunity for students was the panel discussion with the actors after the performance of St Joan at the Sydney Theatre Company in Walsh Bay. The central character was played by brilliant young

actor Sarah Snook who shared the prophetic internal dialogue of St Joan of Arc through the most gripping monologues. With the freedom to adjust our departure time back to the hotel, we were able to stay and participate in the discussions. Not only did Oxley College students pose thoughtful, important questions to the actors and directors in front of an adult, theatrically literate audience, they were complimented for the insights expressed in the preambles to their questions. To be so publically affirmed by some of the country's most accomplished performers again gave the students a strong sense that they belong in this sophisticated world, exploring high level ideas through the arts.

Exploration of the world through Science and Mathematics was also an important feature of the programme with particular highlights at UTS where students enter the Data Arena wearing 3D glasses to be surrounded by millions of plotted points. The Data Arena is essentially just a big graph but 3D allows an extra dimension and a dynamic relationship between the axes and the viewer. The students realised the power of data and how it might transform understanding.

We are always privileged that Macquarie University supports our objectives that students not simply do a tour of the university to find out what they might study in the future but undertake meaningful learning experiences that allow them to "be" university students, learning in lectures and tutorials. A team of scientist and lab technicians helped students run their own electrophoresis gel to analyse sets of DNA in a quest to explore how genes contribute to identity. Professor Ingrid Pillar takes time to deliver a thought provoking lecture about linguistic relativity where she guides students through an analysis of Persian, Pitjanjatjara and English to help them understand the power of language for shaping our beliefs and the implications that might have for our identity.

Rites of Passage is a team effort. We are grateful for the dozens of staff in Sydney and back at Oxley for the time and energy they devote to supporting and managing the programme. We are also grateful for the incredible parent support directly extended to us and through the support of their children. And very importantly, we are grateful to Year 9 for the joy, courage, curiosity and zeal they brought to ROP 2018.

Bronwyn Tregenza

