



Fairbridge College

NEWSLETTER

SPECIAL ISSUE

CANBERRA 2018

From the Principal's Desk

Shortly before Anzac Day last year, Ross and Robbie approached me with a 'crazy idea' that required me to sit down and take some deep breaths. "We want to take the kids to Canberra for Anzac Day next year", they said. "Oh-kay", I said with apprehension. And so began the long process of planning, negotiating and fundraising.

A year later, I found myself in the very early hours of the morning, standing out front of Perth Airport, with ten students and three other staff waiting to check-in for our little adventure. I could never have imagined how truly life-changing this could be...for me and the students.

Whilst in Canberra, the College students were given the opportunity to participate in a variety of educational programs with a focus on Australia's history, culture, heritage and democracy. All of these activities could have been considered by our students as 'boring' and 'lame', but they weren't. There were times when we were sleep-deprived and cranky. There could have been dramas and 'issues' as a result, but there weren't. I know all of this may sound a bit cliché; however, I can assure you that Harmony, JP, Damo, Jamie, Keyara, Taya, Luis, Hannah, Brandon and Jarrod were shining examples of the power of having high expectations for young people.

A trip like this wouldn't be possible without the hard-work and dedication of College staff. To Ross, Lisa and Thor, I would like to personally thank you for taking time away from your families during the school holidays to provide this opportunity to the students. I'd also like to thank Robbie and Paul for driving at all hours of the day/night to ensure our students had transport to and from the airport. To Mandy, Jess, Jayne, Tammy and Bev thanks for supporting our fundraising and logistics.

From their tales and retellings of the trip, it is clear that all of the students took *something* away from the experience. The staff were equally moved by the observable and palpable growth demonstrated by each young person. It is amazing what can happen when you give these kids a chance to rise-up and be the people you know they can be. I am over-the-moon to be sharing our adventure with all of you.

Jen



Itinerary

Monday 23rd April

- ★ Depart Perth
- ★ Arrive Canberra
- ★ Flip Out – Trampoline Centre
- ★ Dinner at the Hotel

Tuesday 24th April

- ★ Breakfast
- ★ Tour of Australian War Memorial
- ★ Lunch in Botanical Gardens
- ★ Tour New Parliament House
- ★ Dinner at the Hotel

Wednesday 25th April

- ★ Anzac Dawn Service
- ★ Breakfast at the Hotel
- ★ Paintball
- ★ Depart Delta Paintball
- ★ Lunch at the Hotel
- ★ Shopping at Canberra Centre

- ★ Black Mountain/Telecom Tower at Sunset
- ★ Dinner at the Hotel

Thursday 26th April

- ★ Breakfast at the Hotel
- ★ Tour Old Parliament House
- ★ Australian Tent Embassy
- ★ Lunch and Pack-up at Hotel
- ★ Re-visit Australian War Memorial
- ★ Dinner and Shopping at Canberra Centre
- ★ Depart Canberra
- ★ Arrive Perth

Special Thanks

This interstate excursion would not have been possible without the support of people and organisations within the College community as well as those farther afield. The trip required extensive financial and human resources in order to make it an adventure of a lifetime for our students.

First, we would like to thank the **Australian Government** for their generous support of our trip. The Australian Government recognises the importance of all young Australians being able to visit the national capital as part of their Civics and Citizenship education. To assist families in meeting the cost of the excursion, the Australian Government is contributing the funding amount of \$240 per student under the **Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER)** program. Now that we have completed our trip, the rebate will be paid directly to the school.

We would also like to thank **Lions Club of Pinjarra** and **Mandurah Murray Mayday Club, Inc.** for their financial contributions. Additionally, the following businesses, organisations and individuals also need to be recognised for their contributions to our fundraising:

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|--|---|
| ★ Bunnings Warehouse - Mandurah | ★ Margaret River Visitors Centre |
| ★ Watershed Wines | ★ Target – Pinjarra |
| ★ Mitre 10 – Northam | ★ Muffin Break – Pinjarra |
| ★ Oakford Equestrian Centre | ★ Pinjarra Pharmacy |
| ★ Northam Natural Health Studio | ★ Fairbridge Village |
| ★ Cheveux -N- Co Hair Salon | ★ Tree of Truth Healing |

Finally, we would also like to say 'thanks' to **Barbara Hunt and James St. Cruise and Travel** for providing the requisite travel/logistical support. Further, thanks to **Qantas** and **Ibis Styles Canberra Eaglehawk** for the hospitality, warmth and understanding shown to our students during their trip.

Reflections on the Trip

We arrived in Canberra at about 9am and went straight to the hotel. We found our rooms and discovered that the beds were very squeaky.

We went to Flip Out but didn't stay for very long as we were all very tired from the flight.

The next day we went to the War Memorial and had a tour which I thoroughly enjoyed, then we headed for lunch and the New Parliament House. My favourite part was the paintings of the past Prime Ministers.

Day three I was super tired as I didn't get much sleep that night. We were up and out by 4.30am to go to the dawn service. It was freezing but it was a very nice service. After the service we went back to the hotel for breakfast and I was able to have a little sleep, then back up for Paint Balling. I was tough as and didn't wear a body guard but that didn't end well!

Back home to get cleaned up and then back out for some shopping in the city.

Day four up nice and early to pack up our rooms then off to Old Parliament House where we did some role playing and had a look through the Senate and the House of Reps. It was a beautiful old building. After that we went back to the city where I bought some new shoes. We had some dinner at the shops then went to the airport to drop the cars and fly back home.

Overall it was a good trip, wish it had been longer.



Harmony

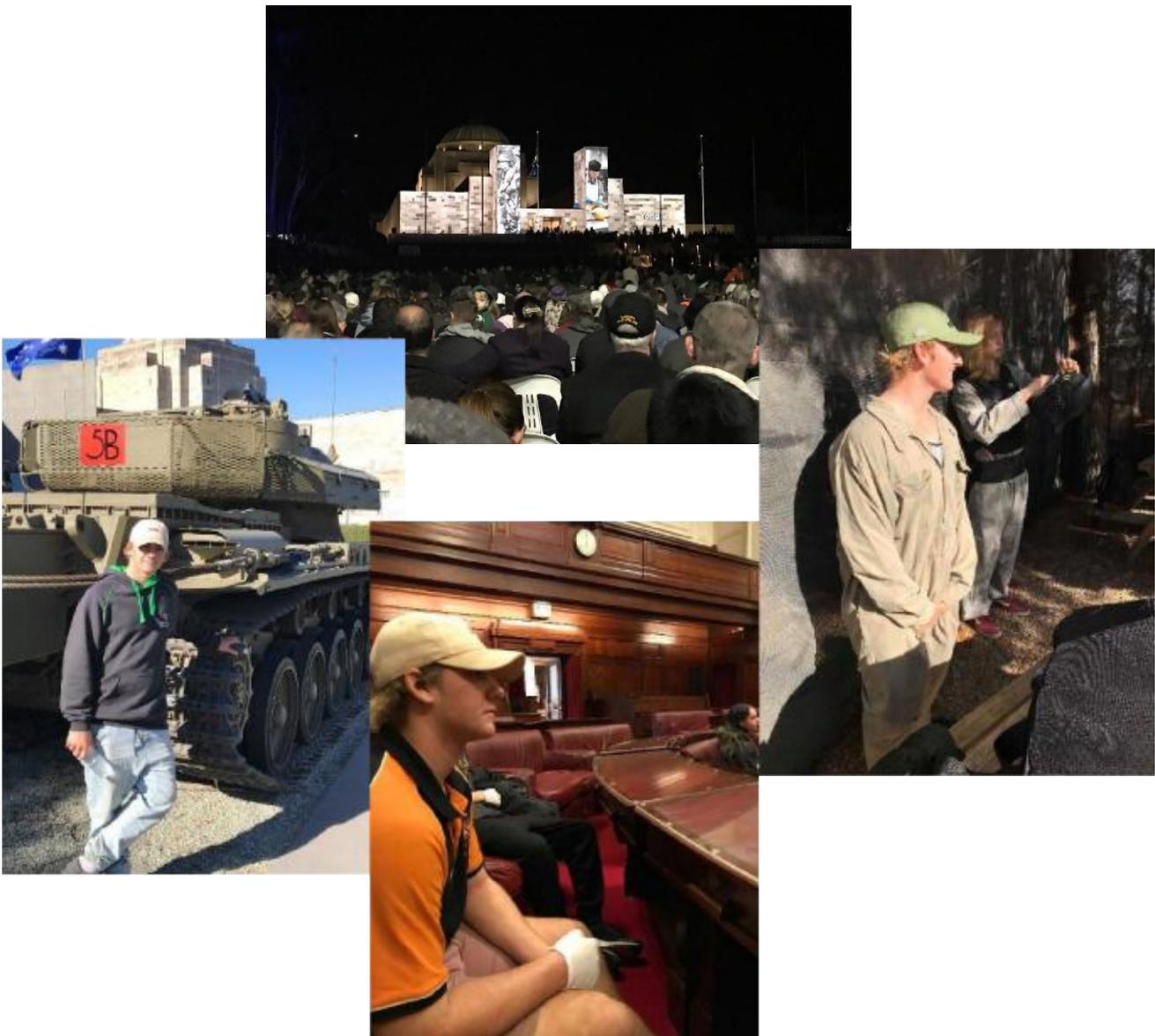
On Wednesday 25th April 2018 we got up early and went to the Dawn Service in the freezing cold Canberra weather.

We stood in a group at the back of the seated crowd. People read out poems and recounts from people that were in the war, some survivors and some that had died. They had photos playing on the towers on either side of the entrance of the people that had served and died in the war.

It was very, very crowded. We sang some songs and said the Lord's Prayer. When the service finished we walked back to our car and drove back to the motel for breakfast.

Later that morning we went to Delta Force Paintball. It was great fun!

Jarrod



I got picked up from the Shell service station on Thomas Rd at 3:30am on Monday morning by Paul and drove to Perth. We arrived at Perth airport at 4:30am.

We departed Perth at 6:05am and got to Melbourne at 11:40am then left for Canberra at 12:35pm. During the flight I played on my phone.

We arrived at Canberra airport at 1:45pm then we rented some vans and went to the hotel. We arrived at the hotel at 3:00pm then we went to Flip Out which is just a terrible bounce with a sock eating foam pit. We left Flip Out at 7:00pm and went back to the hotel for dinner at 7:30pm. After that we could do whatever we wanted at the hotel.

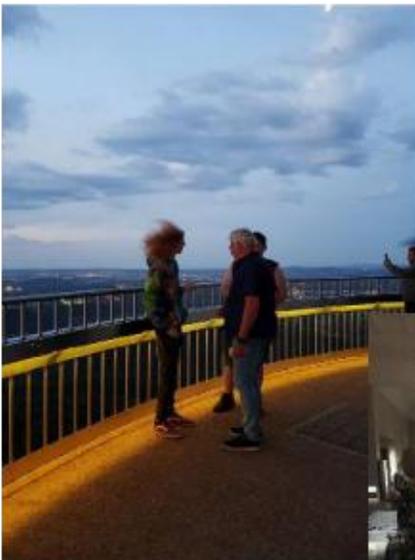
The next day we had breakfast and did some war memorial stuff then had lunch in the city. We went to New Parliament House then went back to the hotel for dinner.

The next day we woke up early for the Anzac Dawn Service, it was really cold. Then we went back to the hotel for breakfast in the city. After breakfast we went to paintball for a couple hours. It was pretty darned good fun except when I got shot by Damien. We went to the hotel for lunch and then drove to the shops to buy things and went back to have dinner.

On the last day we went to the Old Parliament House then we revisited the War Memorial. I decided to wait outside on a bench while the group went in.

Then it was back to the hotel to pack and clean our rooms. We arrived at the airport in the evening and had a flight straight through to Perth. I listened to music and had a game of chess.

Robbie collected us from the airport and dropped me back to the Shell on Thomas Rd. where we waited for my mum to pick me up.



Jamie



We visited the War Memorial while we were in Canberra. The first time we started off by going around the outside while we waited for the other tour to finish. The machinery outside were really big and in good condition on the outside.

It was mostly grey around and the gardens were simplistic and beautiful. Lots of rosemary, didn't see any real poppies planted, although maybe it wasn't the right season.

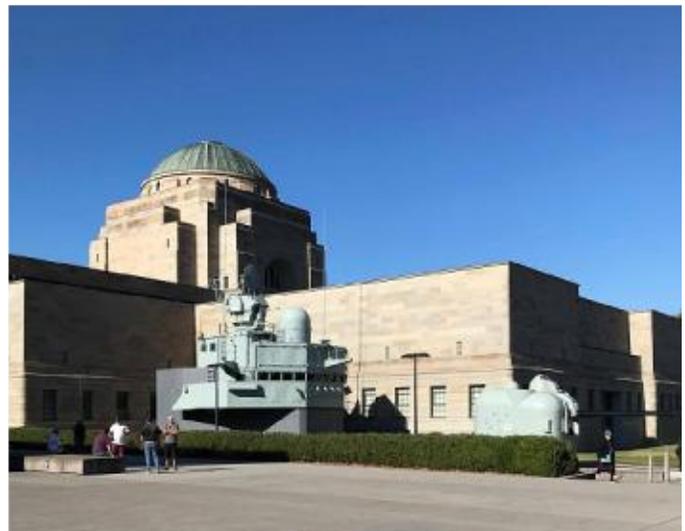
We had a tour guide and she was really nice and informative, the tour went for about an hour and we rushed through it due to time restriction so it felt like it went much faster.

It was even more interesting when we went back as we could properly walk around and take a look at things. After a while it got hard to stay in there especially with the sound effects and videos playing over.

It was good to pay our respects and get a better understanding and view, I'm very grateful for this opportunity.



Hannah



We arrived at Perth airport at 4:30 am which is way too early for human life. Thor decided to sleep in and so nearly missed the plane --- the wombat!

We all hopped on the plane and I got ready for a long flight to Melbourne Airport [skip ahead 4 Hours]

We all land in Melbourne to come across a one hour wait for the next plane to arrive so the luggage can get loaded onto the plane and all the passengers can get seated.

We all boarded the plane and I think only three or so people had ever flown in one like it before. It was a propeller plane and I was quite excited to be on it for take-off and landing (they were a thrill!) but it scared most of the passengers from our group ("ha ha").

Onto the next flight which was about one hour to my recollection, it was actually quite enjoyable for me. We flew over a few amazing things. For example, there was a bit of fog on the ground and we flew over it. First time I'd seen that anyway.

We landed an hour and a bit later in Canberra. I expected it to be more city than farmland but I was wrong! I was very surprised to see it was more farmland and it blew my mind actually that a capital city was more dirt than concrete.

Luis



On Wednesday 25th April we woke up early and went to the dawn service. It was cold but a very amazing experience. There were lots of photos shown and people spoke about their personal experience of war as well as reading recounts from others that had been involved.

We then went to paintball. At the start I really didn't want to do it but after I started I really enjoyed it and would definitely do it again. I hadn't done anything like that before. Wearing the mask was hot but I was shot in the head so I was glad that I had it on.

After lunch we went to Canberra Central to have a look around. I hung around with Taya and Harmony looking through some of the clothes shops. I didn't buy anything but enjoyed having a look around.

My favourite part of the trip was the War Memorial. There was lots of different information and sections on different wars. The guide was very good and shared a lot of information too. We spent some time walking around the grounds looking at the statues, ships and army vehicles.

The plane trip was good too. I watched *Murder on the Orient Express* and just relaxed. I was really glad that I didn't get air sick like a couple of the others.

Keyara



We arrived at Perth Airport at around 4am on Monday morning ready to go on the plane. We had to wait for Thor, who had woken up late and almost missed the plane.

The plane was very boring as inflight entertainment was boring but the arrival was fun. We then took a second, smaller pane from Melbourne Airport to Canberra Airport.

After arriving we went to the hotel to unpack after which we proceeded to go to Flipout, the Canberra version of Bounce.

The next day we woke up and visited the War Memorial Museum which is where the ANZAC Dawn service would be taking place. We saw many great things inside such as the Wall of Remembrance and the Grave of the Unknown Soldier.

We then visited New Parliament House which we could see from the War Memorial.

On Wednesday we woke up at 3am to get ready and head out for the ANZAC day service. The Paintball was up next and there were four maps that we played on. Two of which were attack/defend maps.

We visited the shops for an hour or two then we returned to the hotel.

Thursday we visited the Old Parliament House Building. We learnt about Gough Whitlam and how he was removed from power by the Governor General.

We proceeded to the shops for several hours until it was time to head to the airport.

We arrived at the airport about 5pm, left at about 6.30 arriving in Perth at about 9.20pm.

Damien



On the 23rd of April, myself and a group of other students went to Canberra for an excursion. Over those few days we went out and did all different types of activities, including going to the ANZAC Dawn Service ceremony, Delta Force Paint Ball, Flip Out, the Parliament houses, War Memorial and shopping.

I think that Canberra was an awesome experience with fun activities to do and I learned a lot from the ANZAC ceremony and War Memorial. My favourite part about the Canberra trip was going to the ANZAC ceremony as I had an eye-opening experience, being there and hearing all the stuff they had to go through to serve our country. One thing that I learnt, and that I will never forget, is how strong all those people were to go through what they did, fighting for our country.

Taya



My Canberra experience was very insightful. The ANZAC dawn service was very emotional. The Fairbridge family was very well represented at the service decked out in our personalised Fairbridge hoodies. Many of our students who went on the trip have never been out of Western Australia, never been on a plane, never been in a motel and never been away from their families for an extended period of time.

The Fairbridge Canberra trip was useful for me on a personal level as well. I had the opportunity to catch up with a long time fellow basketballer by the name of Cal Bruton. Cal Bruton was a long time Perth Wildcat player and coach who is in the Australian Basketball Hall of Fame.

Thor

I have to admit I was a bit concerned when I was asked to attend the Canberra Trip with the upper students at Fairbridge. I was worried that it would be too far out of the students' comfort zone. Many had not flown before or been out of the state let alone been involved in activities at Parliament House. This could be a recipe for disaster.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. The excitement and enjoyment from the students was evident throughout the whole trip.

Ross had organised everything so comprehensively that there was very little room for error and the students responded extremely well to all the visits and excursions that had been organised.

The first challenge was meeting at the airport which was ticked off easily, the next was the flight. I, myself, am not a fan of travel by air so I was more than curious to find out how the students would cope. Again they were exemplary, dealing with whatever came up for them in a mature and capable manner.

The students did not stop surprising me the whole trip. Their attitude and respect at the War Memorial was touching and brought me to tears a number of times. Damien reading the Oath, other students offering the poppy at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Luis thanking a serviceman for his service, and so many softly spoken comments of awe and respect during the visit. Many of the students asked to go back to the memorial on the last day, which we did, and again I was touched by their reverence.

The Parliament House visit was another situation where the students proved that they were indeed capable of respectful engagement. I was impressed by their co-operation and involvement as well as the questions that they asked during the tour. We role played the sacking of Whitlam which was confronting for some as we had to read aloud in front of the group. They rose to the challenge and the role play made the situation that occurred easier to understand for all of us.

The Dawn Service... well, I was again rocked at the amount of respect and engagement that I witnessed. The ANZAC Ceremony is always an emotional time for me but it was doubly so when I stood in silence at the foot of the memorial and shared with the students those moments as the dawn broke through and we listened to the carolling of the birds and the haunting sound of the Last Post.

We went to Delta Force Paintballing after the service and the irony was not lost on the students as I engaged in conversation with many of them about how terrifying war would be for those that were facing real bullets instead of paintballs. I was speaking with one of the staff and turned to see JP helping out another staff member by packing paintballs into the canisters.

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We had a couple opportunities to visit Canberra Central for shopping and the students noticed a number of homeless people sitting around asking for money. The second time we went to the Shopping Centre JP and Jarrod took it upon themselves to take our left over sandwiches, apples and packets of chips to distribute amongst the homeless people that they had seen. Another moment for me where I was touched at the unexpected selflessness of the students.

I now count it as a privilege that I was asked to be involved in the Canberra Trip. As my trepidation turned to respect over our time there I realized that these students should not be underestimated and I was proud of how they handled themselves under these very alien circumstances.

Lisa

Monday 23rd April 2018

I woke early, at 1.45am, to leave my house in Northam at 2.30am, to make the trip to the airport, and arrive well before the rest of the group arrived. I arrived at the airport at around 3.50am where I made a last check of my luggage and caught the shuttle bus to the QANTAS terminal.

By this time the students had made a Canberra group chat, which depicted a group of tired but excited students on a bus heading for the airport. Thanks to Paul, getting up early to drive the bus, the students arrived all very excited around 4.30am with Jen and Lisa arriving about the same time. No Thor!

Thor *finally* arrived at check in with 1 minute to spare. He and Jen then quickly made their way upstairs to join us in the boarding lounge. He made it by the skin of his teeth.

Boarding was called for QANTAS flight QF480 to Melbourne and we made our way onto the plain with a group of excited, some very nervous, students.

One of the students became a little agitated from the cramped seating and asked for me to walk with him. We made our way up and down the aisles and stopped in the galley area of the aircraft to talk to the stewardess. Jayden and I told the stewardess where we had come from and where we were going. She then gave the students soft drinks (not normally given on morning flights). The stewardess later gave the students savoury muffins that were left over from the flight crew's morning tea. Whatever I said worked a treat!

On arrival in Canberra we make our way to luggage collection via the toilets for some urgent relief. Our bags were easily identifiable as I had given everybody a green ribbon to tie on their luggage before we left Perth.

After checking into the motel we all unloaded our luggage and explored our rooms. We were all very tired but the students were keen to go to Flip Out. The students had a good time at Flip Out, however they all commented that it was not as good as Bounce in Cannington, but were all grateful for the outing.

After dinner the students and staff settled into their rooms. The staff were keen to sleep but, even though they were tired, the students were awake for half the night.

Thank god the Dawn Service was two days away!

Tuesday 24th April 2018

After breakfast we boarded the vehicles and headed to the Australian War Memorial. We were treated to a fantastic guided tour of part of the museum. It is impossible to see all of the museum in one hour. We learned from the guide that if you are showing someone something in a painting, you never point at the painting, you use your thumb as a pointer. Pointing at paintings is disrespectful to the artist. Both students and staff were impressed with the museum. We also walked around the grounds to look at the static display of army vehicles and cannons. A statue of Simpson and his donkey at the front of the memorial was a favourite.

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From the War Memorial we headed for the Canberra Botanical Gardens for lunch.

The motel had given us a packed lunch. They gave us a variety of beautiful sandwiches, apples, water and packets of crisps. One of the students kept asking for KFC.

We were treated to another interesting guided tour of Parliament house by a very knowledgeable young lady. We got to see both chambers of parliament and learnt a great deal about the workings of parliament. Our guide pointed out (from the Prime Minister portraits we saw), that the longest serving Prime Ministers had the longest eye brows, and the shortest serving Prime Minister had the smallest eye brows. We were waiting for her to point at the portraits. She didn't.

We left the Parliament House around 3.45pm for our journey back across the New South Wales border to the Motel. After dinner the students and staff reminisced about the day. The conversations were always encouraging and I could see some positive changes in the students even after only two days.

Wednesday 25th April

We rose early to be at the ANZAC Day Dawn Service by 4.30am at the Australian War Memorial. Jen was able to secure parking for us on a friend's driveway about a 5-minute walk away from the cenotaph.

Even though we arrived early most of the seating was already taken. This was OK as the students preferred to stand at the back of the seated area. Jayden stood away from the group as he was a little overwhelmed with the crowd of around 38,000 people.

We listened to letters written by or to soldiers who have been to the front line, which were quite emotional. The letters gave the students an insight into the atrocities of war, and the bravery of the soldiers.

From the time we arrived at the Dawn Service and until we left, all we could hear was a few muffled coughs, a few infants crying and some birds calling in the dawn. Nothing but silence from the huge crowd as well as our students.

Following the Dawn Service, even though the students were tired, they were still enthusiastic about going to Delta Force Paintball in Tuggeranong.

We met a guy named Mark who took the players under his wing and got them sorted with all the equipment needed to play paintball. The guys, as well as Lisa, got suited and were soon excited and ready to listen to the safety instructions from one of the marshals. I went back to Mark to settle the bill for the players he asked me where we were from. I also told him a little bit about the students' backgrounds, and that we were on a limited budget. Mark then threw in a bunch of ammunition, longer barrels for the guns, gloves and protectors for free. Thank you Mark. Everybody was having a ball except Thor. He was cowering under his hoodie, yelling at the players to aim the other way.

After lunch we went into Canberra Central to the shopping mall where the students were given a couple of hours of free time. One of the students was *still* asking to have KFC and was thrilled to find the mall had some, but then, sadly, they had run out of chicken. Oh no!

Thursday 26th April

Our last day.

After breakfast the group made their way to the Old Parliament House. We arrived there around 8.30am and were greeted by another knowledgeable guide named Sally. The theme of the tour was the dismissal of Gough Whitlam.

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The students and some staff were given roles to play featuring Gough Whitlam, The Governor General, The Leader of the Opposition and other important people involved in the dismissal. The rest of the crew were either government ministers or opposition ministers. The play rolled on, as we visited the old House of Representatives and the old Senate chamber as well as the Prime Minister's Office. We concluded the tour on the steps of the Old Parliament House where the announcement was made to sack Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. With students and staff chanting "We want Gough! We want Gough!" the tour ended. We walked across the road from the Old Parliament House to look at the Aboriginal Tent Embassy before returning to the motel for lunch, pack our bags and check out.

The students found the return flight to be much better than the flight over, as the in-flight entertainment had a lot more selection. We were treated to dinner and drinks as well as chocolates. I found myself dancing in the aisle with a stewardess who later gave me all the leftover chocolates. She was a nice lady.

Back in Perth and bags collected, all travellers soon dispersed in different directions. Robbie collected the students in the school bus and drove them to Mandurah and Pinjarra. I arrived home in Northam around 11.30pm exhausted but rewarded by a group of fantastic, well behaved and changed students.

Ross

