



CMS Head Off The Beaten Track

Words and photos by Tom Clements

The CMS Clontarf Academy recently embarked on an eye-opening journey from the dust of the Red Centre, Alice Springs, to the majestic shores and beauty of the community, Yirrkala.

Two Land Cruisers, one trailer, ten swags, two staff and eight eager young minds made for a wonderful trip, filled with endless laughter, action, education and even the odd prank!

Oh, and let's not forget "Wilson" the team mascot Volleyball who accompanies our Academy on all camps and major trips. Wilson represents the "Spirit" of our Clontarf Academy and as such, is treated with respect, love, care, and most importantly, NEVER left behind.

The Clontarf Foundation exists to improve the education, discipline, life skills, self-esteem and employment prospects of young Aboriginal men and by doing so equips them to participate meaningfully in society. The eight students selected for this particular trip had earned their place through excellent school attendance, Clontarf attendance and completion of school work.

The trip included plenty of activities, including a Welcome to Country by the traditional owners of the Bukudal community. There were educational language sessions on the local dialect, spear making, arts and craft sessions, and even an early morning training session on the beach.

Students also relished the opportunity to "cash in" against the staff in a modified AFL game, with some decent bumps and the odd share of verbal banter. Meeting special guests from Google, the NRL, Aurizon, and GrainCorp, just to name a few, really broadened the horizons for our boys. It was great to see so much genuine interaction between everyone.

A true highlight for many of our young men was interacting with the students from the Yirrkala Academy. The scope of the Clontarf program certainly became apparent to our boys, who soon forged strong friendships with the Yirrkala students. In fact, for one lucky individual it was his first time walking on a beach, let alone hitting the waves in the ocean with his mates.

Our students gained a true appreciation for the beauty our magnificent country has to offer. It could be said that for this trip, with culture, comes respect. After seven days, 4058 kilometres, two flat tyres, and three remote towns, a truly remarkable journey was complete.

This camps theme song: Wake me up (Avicii)

"From Little Things Big Things Grow"

