Year 7 Canberra/Sydney Tour 2013

This newsletter is designed to keep you up to date with our latest plans, and to give you more detail about the exciting tours we have organised at each venue.
The tour is eight days in duration. We depart on the Friday of Week 9 of Term 3 and arrive back on the last day of term. Our departure times are 10.10am, 10.50am and 4.30pm on 20 September, and our returns times are 6.20pm or 8.00pm on 27 September. I am currently finalising flight details and will let you know specific times for your daughter once they are available.

Canberra Accommodation
This year we are staying at Bush Capital Lodge in Canberra. We have used this facility for the last couple of years and have been very impressed with both its layout and management. It is purpose-built for school groups such as ours, and our group will occupy the entire facility.

Canberra Highlights
This is shaping up to be an exciting tour. All of our bookings have been confirmed so here is a potted version of the first five days.

Australian Institute of Sport
At the AIS we will have a guided tour of the whole facility, with opportunities to watch athletes completing their training. The guides are usually young athletes currently training at the facility who give first-hand accounts of life at the village. We will also have the chance to play a series of indoor and outdoor games, followed by a session in the sports gallery upstairs.

National Capital Exhibition Centre
This visit provides the girls with a basic history of the establishment of Canberra, and an overview of how this beautiful city is laid out.

Floriade
Floriade is the flower festival held annually in Canberra, offering entertainment, regional food, workshops and educational demonstrations, and garden bed displays. It is a delightful way to begin our Canberra stay, and unwind at the end of a busy first day.

National Gallery
The “must sees” at the gallery on our visit are the iconic Ned Kelly series in the Sidney Nolan Gallery, and controversial “Blue Poles” by Jackson Pollock.

Questacon
Questacon, The National Science and Technology Centre, is an interactive science centre similar to a giant Scitech. We go in the evening and usually have the luxury of having the entire complex to ourselves. The fairground gallery on the ground floor, which includes a giant free fall slide, is always a highlight of the visit.

National Museum
Packed with memorabilia and interactive displays, this museum is a showcase of Australia’s heritage. Along the way the girls will also see the Circa rotating theatre, K-Space, for a glimpse of the future, and the Eternity Gallery for snapshots of significant events of the past.
Parliament House
After enjoying afternoon tea at the taxpayers’ expense we will tour both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and along the way we will see some of the national treasures displayed within this magnificent building.

National Portrait Gallery
The National Portrait Gallery displays some 400 portraits of people who have shaped Australia and who continue to shape our nation. The guides who run the programme at the NPG are both innovative and passionate, and bring to life the subjects of the portraits.

Australian War Memorial
This memorial is so significant we actually visit on two different days so that we can take full advantage of the wealth of information it contains. On our first self-guided visit we try to get to ANZAC Hall to see the three powerful audio-visual displays on show. We also visit the Vietnam Gallery where there is a full-sized helicopter and a simulated medi-vac including sound track, flashing lights and wind. It is a chilling demonstration of the dangers and tragedy of the Vietnam War. We also take a quick tour through the World War 1 gallery to look at the detailed dioramas of some significant battle scenes, particularly in Europe.

Museum of Democracy
During this visit we will have the chance to role play an important event in Australia’s political history in the actual seats occupied at the time. Some lucky students will have the chance to sit in the seats occupied by Prime Ministers, Leaders of the Opposition and Speakers of the past, whilst the rest of us debate heatedly as MPs. We generally finish the visit with an impersonation of Gough Whitlam upon his dismissal in 1975.

Government House
This relatively recent addition to the itinerary has proved a huge hit over the last couple of years. The building and grounds are beautiful, and the Governor General always makes an attempt to come down and talk to the girls. We are hopeful her timetable will allow that to happen this year.

These are just a few of the highlights of our stay in Canberra. It is impossible to do justice to the visit in a couple of pages but the girls will be exposed to the country’s national treasures and learn first-hand about our system of government.

In the next edition I will outline our exciting plans for Sydney.

Mrs Judy Lague
Head of Year 7