

# Changing our outlook on life

## EDITORIAL

By MIA NEGLINE

THERE is no doubt that our perspectives on life are enhanced by means of travel. As we experience different lifestyles, cultures and social structures, our horizons are broadened.

Journeying to unfamiliar places allows us to develop personal qualities as well as a deeper understanding of the world in which we live.

Living in a modernised society, we are consumers, often taking for granted the things that are essential to our quality of life. While our time is spent treasuring material goods, we often don't consider the social justice issues present in developing countries.

Volunteering abroad allows us to gain unique insights into other cultures as well as share our own skills and expertise to promote sustainability. By witnessing the living conditions of people in developing countries, our eyes are opened to the world.

Travelling overseas opens many opportunities which are beyond reach of the comfort of our homes, such as meeting new people, engaging ourselves in other cultures and sharing experiences.

Student exchange, for example,

is a rewarding and life-changing experience. By participating in an exchange program, we return with increased self-esteem, confidence and maturity.

Travelling abroad doesn't just highlight cultural differences, it also displays the similarities between people from differing walks of life. A sense of open-mindedness is associated with travel as we learn to accept the traditions and beliefs of others. Stereotypes are often caused by a lack of exposure to other cultures. Travel can help break the perceived barriers which distance our empathy and judgment.

For youth in particular, travel increases independence. Whether travelling solo or with a group of people, escaping the comfort of our own homes requires adjustment to different physical and social environments. Components of travel, such as overcoming language barriers and managing a budget, are crucial to developing a sense of self-reliance.

In today's society, travel is a lifestyle. It is unfortunate that some people tend to see the commercial value of travelling rather than the spiritual value – involving new lifestyles, cultures and belief systems.

Travelling not only enriches our personal values, but allows us to develop a more profound understanding of the diverse world we live in.



Cartoon: Jennifer Pryor



EMBRACING: Student Cassie Bower experiences the local customs.

## Vietnam trip aids empathy

By SIAN BAYNHAM, KEELY DUGGAN and JOHN KENNEDY

IT is said that travel broadens the horizons and this was certainly true for the 23 year 10, 11, and 12 students from St Paul's who travelled for three weeks throughout Vietnam last December.

Accompanied by teachers, students flew from Sydney to Ho Chi Minh City and finally to Danang in the central coastal region of Vietnam. Students had been structured into two teams for separate journeys throughout Vietnam until they reunited in Hanoi for the return home.

Team One completed a social justice project with the residents of the Hoi An Centre for the Homeless

for Physically and Mentally Disabled. Their time was spent engaging with and escorting a small group of wheelchair-bound, intellectually impaired young men beyond the borders of the centre and around the streets of Hoi An.

"It was very eye-opening; you think your life's tough until you see how these people live," said team member Ellen Parker.

Team Two completed a trek in the Mai Chau area, before both teams travelled to Sapa. A four-day trek with village trails that were ankle-deep in mud was challenging.

Such an immersion program had an impact in encouraging students to see the humanity that links the countries.

## Pupils have exchange with Japan

By CATHERINE MACKAY

ON March 15, a group of students from Katori, Japan, visited St Paul's for a true blue Aussie experience. The group sat nervously and anxiously waiting for the arrival of their host students, who were feeling the same way. Host student Catherine MacKay said: "I was nervous but looking forward to the experience."

The hosts then went home with their guests to settle in and spend the weekend getting acquainted.

Most Australian students were very interested in hearing about life in Japan and how different their lifestyle was from the average Australian family.

Through the few days they were at St Paul's, the Japanese students experienced Australian culture, food and ways of life; they even learnt some Aussie slang. They also made lamingtons, went bush dancing and toured Newcastle beaches.

Sharon MacKay, host to Satomi, commented: "For our whole family it was a great experience to hear about Satomi's family. I give her credit for being a brave young lady to come all the way to Australia".

Cate Thompson, Japanese teacher at St Paul's, said: "The students were very polite and kind and were an absolute pleasure to have come to our school".

Mrs Thompson and 16 students will make a return visit in July.

## Never a frown when you visit C A Brown

By CARLY WHITE, JESSICA GODWIN and MARISA PEARCE

EVERY Friday afternoon, a group of St Paul's High School students walks down to the local C A Brown Anglican Care Village during sport time to mingle with the residents.

For one hour the students and residents participate in games and do art activities set up by the carers. They also dress up in costumes that C A Brown supply as a talking point for the residents.

The residents' faces light up as the students walk in.

The supporting teacher, Ms Walker said: "It's a nice way to end the week, and it makes your own problems seem a lot smaller."

Student carer Paige Stanley said: "It's fun and interesting and I love the opportunity to make someone smile."

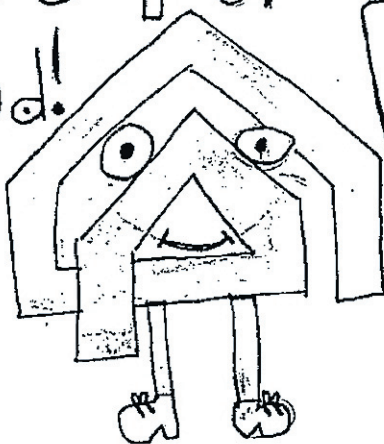
Students have been working at the home for the last three years and have found it to be an enjoyable encounter and allows for generosity from all involved.



GENEROUS: The St Paul's High students who visit C A Brown each week. Picture: Marisa Pearce

OPINIONS EXPRESSED IN THIS SCHOOL NEWSPAPER ARE NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF THE COMPETITION SPONSORS

Here For Good!



Advertisement created by Dean Blundell, of St Paul's High School, Booragul.

Here for their future, here for the community

13 19 87 newcastlepermanent.com.au

Here for good.

