

Leadership Trip for Captains

On Friday 27 May John Ryan and I, along with Mrs Westgarth, participated in a leadership program for school captains throughout the west.

Early Friday morning, around 8.00am we flew into Sydney. It was the first time that I had ever been on a plane. I was nervous at first but now I would have to say that I have caught the flying bug. It was a beautiful day in Sydney as we caught the train into the city. Walking through the hustle and bustle of busy morning traffic we arrived at our first stop, the Sunrise studios. Here we met and had photos with, and got autographs from, the Sunrise team. We even got on TV which was a highlight in my books!

After our brief stint on television we continued walking and arrived at State Parliament House. This is where we met up with other school captains; there would have been at least one hundred students all up. After a brief talk in the theatrette about the history of State Parliament and the introduction of the various MPs from the schools' local electorate, we gathered in the Jubilee Room where morning tea was provided.

Soon after we were divided into two groups and were given a tour of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly where we sat in the public viewing area and watched live debates. This was very interesting as we saw firsthand how different issues are discussed and the way in which the politicians go about a debate. Concluding the tour of State Parliament we all met once again in the theatrette where questions could be asked and the closing remarks were made. After this a delicious lunch was provided.

After lunch we all walked to Government House. Seeing Government House was absolutely amazing, it was a beautiful building with over 100 rooms. Once again we were divided into groups and were given a guided tour of the main rooms which consisted of the main hall, the large dining room which had a huge table that seated 27, as well as the two main lounge rooms and banquet room. Each of the rooms were absolutely beautifully decorated and furnished with antique pieces.

When the tour was completed we were asked to wait patiently for Her Excellency, Professor Marie Bashir AC, CVO, the Governor of NSW, to arrive. While we waited we were allowed to wander the beautiful grand grounds and take in the amazing harbour views.

Once inside again everyone was seated and Her Excellency addressed us with a wonderful talk about the history of Government House and the first Governor of NSW, Captain Arthur Philip. She also spoke with pride and passion about her background and Australia.

After her 45 minute address we were given afternoon tea in the grounds where John and I had the chance to meet one-on-one with the Governor General as well as have our photo taken with her, which we will treasure.

Government House was the final stop on the program. We departed from Government House and on the way to the station we diverted into the Apple Store, which was a really special treat.

The entire trip of flying to Sydney, touring Parliament House and Government House and meeting Her Excellency was a fantastic experience for both John and myself.

I would like to thank Mrs Westgarth for taking us and being with us throughout the trip and Mrs Taylor for organising the trip with Country Area Program funding.

It was certainly a trip to remember.

Rachael Cooney