

2017 MECS Central Australian Trip

Saturday 16th September to Sunday 1st October

Dear Parents of Year 10 students,

I would like to take this opportunity to provide you with relevant information needed for the **MECS 2017 Central Australian Trip for Year 10 students**. Please take careful note of the following important information pertaining to the trip.

Leadership Team

The leadership team will consist of **Peter Beams (camping), Narelle Sketcher, Roger Fernando (trip leader), Anne-Maree Forbes, Nicola Hewitt (medical), Nathan Hunter, Natalie Peeler, Craig Goldsmith, Jonny Wouters**, and our wonderful "cooks", headed up by **Fiona Haynes** supported by **Krista Bowden, Marilyn Mangold and Alistair Hewitt**.

Please return the **2017 CONFIDENTIAL MEDICAL INFORMATION FOR CENTRE TRIP** form indicating any medical concerns **by Monday 7th August**. On the packing day, **Friday the 15th of September**, any current or new medication is to be given to Nicola Hewitt and or Jonny Wouters in a **plastic zip-lock bag**. These staff members will be responsible for administering any medication required by your child whilst on the trip.

You will also find attached an itinerary for the trip. This should be kept in a safe place (e.g. on the fridge) so you can keep up with us on the trip and to also remind you to write to your child while he/she is away.

The Most Important Thing – Why we are going.

The purpose of this venture is **educational** and consequently, the trip is compulsory for our Year 10 students. The range of activities experienced by students varies from very structured learning activities like talks, reading and writing, to incidental contact with personalities and places that evoke feelings and responses.

En route the students will be guided in their observation and learning by a document which contains maps, poetry, articles to be read and assignments to be completed both individually and in small groups. Students will also keep a journal, so that back at MECS during further learning activities, there will be a record of events, feelings and experiences; the beginnings of analysis and responses to what is happening.

Past experience tells us that social interaction will be an important aspect of the tour. Much of the trip will be spent in close proximity to one another. This interaction will be largely spontaneous and almost certainly insights about each other will be deepened, allowing better understanding. A spirit of love, care and gentleness will be promoted actively by the staff, and opportunities for communal devotions will daily orient us in our relationship with God and each other.

Contact with Aboriginal people will be fruitful as we seek to understand more of their joys and concerns, and will provide a tremendous background to studies that will follow the trip. We will be involved with Aboriginal people in a number of ways: visiting country; walking and talking; sporting contests, eating our food and theirs and attending church.

The experience of travelling to a situation *where we are in the minority, where we are lacking in understanding, where we don't know the simple skills of survival*, is at times unsettling, but it always profoundly changes the way we think about minority groups in our own western situation. We trust that these experiences will lead our students to take a greater interest in and concern for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters.

Another vital aspect of this trip is that students gain some understanding of the vastness of this country in which the Lord has placed us. To travel virtually all day, every day, for five days, returning from Yuendumu to Melbourne, may be an experience upon which to base such knowledge.

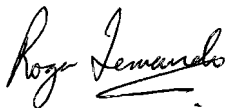
Climbing Uluru

As part of our ongoing care and concern for our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, the school community has made the decision that climbing Uluru will not be a part of the program. The Uluru experience includes time at the cultural centre, art during the sunset viewing and walking around part of the rock with accompanying explanations about dreaming stories and geological formation.

Contact Details

If you have any concerns or questions regarding any of the information provided in this letter, do not hesitate to contact Dr Fernando at school on **9738 6062 (till 6 pm)** or rfernando@mecs.vic.edu.au

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Roger Fernando
Centre Trip Coordinator
25/07/2017

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

DEPARTURE AND RETURN DATES and TIMES:

The Centre Trip will be conducted from **Saturday 16th September to Sunday 1st October** inclusively. In order to leave on time, students will need to be assembled in the Senior School Carpark by **5.30 am** on **Saturday 16th September**. To facilitate an early and smooth departure, we would like to pack the coach and trailer on the day before departure. All luggage, including **backpacks/daypacks** must be at the Senior School car park on **Friday 15th September** between **4.00pm and 5.00pm** for packing and checking. The Centre Trip will return on **Sunday 1st October at 7.00pm** in the “kiss and drop” area below the primary school.

SENDING MAIL TO YOUR CHILD WHILE HE/SHE IS ON CENTRE TRIP:

Letters may be sent to the following address, with **MECS TOURS** written very **prominently (write it in a box as below)**, to ensure that mail is not misdirected.

MECS TOURS

Student's Name

C/- Alice Springs Post Office

N.T. 0870

MECS TOURS

Student's Name

C/- Yulara Post Office

N.T. 0872

We strongly recommend that all parents write (early in the trip) to their son/daughter, as this will really help to stave off any homesickness they might be experiencing. The **last** days that we will be collecting mail is **Monday 25th September** in **Alice Springs** and **Wednesday 27th of September** at **Yulara (Uluru)**.

RULES:

The Senior School rules, including the dress policy, apply on the Centre Trip. Parents should note that in the event of behaviour which causes serious problems or danger for the group, the student(s) concerned will be sent home by air at their parent's expense.

EMERGENCIES:

The staff will take student emergency information on the trip. **It is vital that any relevant medical information regarding your child is provided on the School Camp Permission form** (already issued). This will allow staff to administer medical treatment to your child, should this be required. Parents will be notified as soon as is reasonably possible if medical treatment has been necessary. If your child is an asthmatic, you must provide an **“Asthma Action Plan”** which should be worked out in consultation with your doctor. In case of emergency please ring Dr. Fernando on **0418 555 727** or Peter Beams on **0409 552 144**.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION (cont)

CAKES AND BISCUITS FOR SUPPER:

Each family is asked to provide either a cake or some biscuits, (no chocolate, as it melts) which should be **shop**-bought and left in packaging as, unfortunately, homemade “goodies” do not survive the Central Australian conditions. Please bring along these packaged cakes and biscuits on **Friday 15th September** the day the coach is packed.

PERSONAL EXPENSES:

Students are advised to bring a small amount of spending money as there are opportunities to buy items at many of the stops on the trip. Good quality Aboriginal art is available at the Yuendumu Art Centre and purchase of these will benefit the community.

WHAT NOT TO TAKE:

- **Jewellery and other personal valuables**, except for watches.
- **Electronic Gadgets:** Students are reminded that **no** electronic gadgetry of any sort (mobile phones, ipods, gameboys, MP3 players) are allowed on the trip. However, two **school mobile phones** will be available for students to use in the **event** that public phones are **not** available.
- **Stuffed toys:** No, because they are a nuisance on the coach.
- **Personal appliances:** Please leave hairdryers and straighteners at home.
- **Too many clothes:** *Be ruthless* about the amount of clothing packed. Six or seven changes of underclothing and three or four changes of other clothing is ample. Washing facilities are available en route. Please under-pack rather than over-pack. In the last few years we have had to tow large heavy trailers. For these reasons the **maximum** suitcase weight is set at **16 kgs**.
- Any clothes that might be considered ‘borderline’ in adhering to the Senior School dress code. This relates specifically to short and skirt length.

WHAT TO BRING

The following items will be checked on Friday 15th September.

- **Current medication** to be given to a staff member.
- **Suitcase** small to medium (max. size 630 mm x 460 mm x 200 mm). **Maximum** weight 16 kgs.
- **Warm sleeping bag**, as the temperature can fall to 0^oc in the desert
- **Pillow**
- **Lilo** or inflatable airbed (no **swags** or **mattresses**)
- **Warm clothing:** jeans, jumper, jacket, tracksuit to sleep in
- **Cool Clothing:** Three **collared** shirts for hiking, t-shirts with sleeves.
- **Shorts** must meet SS Dress guidelines (***past extended hand length***).
- **Underwear and socks** (X 7 sets)
- **Skirt (to or below knee)** (female students are required to wear a skirt for the church service)
- **Raincoat** with hood in the event of wet weather
- **Bathers** and **Towel**
- **Personal toiletries** (keep these to a minimum. Eg. limited cosmetics)
- **Two pairs of shoes consisting of:**
 - **Sturdy shoes for hiking and**
 - **Comfortable runners** (No low cut shoes under any circumstances)
- **Thongs** for showering, **Odour eaters** and **Tinea powder/cream**
- **Wrist watch**
- **Camera** (*optional but advised*)
- **Washing powder** (small amount in container with tight fitting lid) and **pegs**.
- **Plastic bags** for dirty washing
- **Fly net** for over hat (optional but advised)
- **Gaiters** (optional - for protection against bindies.)
- **Music CD** (*optional, 1 only*) with no inappropriate lyrics.
- **Backpack/Daypack** (will be **provided by the school**) to carry the following:
 - **Journal** to record YOUR trip
 - **Centre Trip document** (will be given to students on Day 1)
 - **Pencil case** containing pens, pencils, sharpener, rubber, etc.
 - **Drink bottles** - at least **2** litres in total (can be 2 separate litres.)
 - **Torch** and spare batteries.
 - **Wet ones** for washing hands when water is not available
 - **Half a roll of toilet paper**
 - **"Band-aids"**
 - **Hand cream** and **lip salve**
 - **Throat lozenges** eg. Strepsils
 - **Sunscreen** (blockout) and **Sunglasses**
 - **Whistle on cord**

To be brought on the Day of Departure:

- **Cut lunch** for Day 1

ITINERARY FOR 2017 YEAR 10 CENTRE TRIP

DAY No.	DAY	DATE	DESTINATION (▲ Denotes - Bush Camps)
Day 0	Friday	15 th September	Pack coach (4 to 5pm). Bring all luggage and medication) including backpack to the Senior school car park.
Day 1	Saturday 790 km	16 th September	Arrive 5.30 am for departure to Adelaide <i>(Don't forget to write to your child)</i>
Day 2	Sunday 588 km	17 th September	Adelaide to Glendambo
Day 3	Monday 644 km	18 th September	Glendambo to bush camp on Mulga Park Road ▲ <i>Last day to write to your child at Alice Springs.</i>
Day 4	Tuesday 482 km	19 th September	Mulga Park Road to Alice Springs to Tilmouth Well.
Day 5	Wednesday 111 km	20 th September	Tilmouth Well to Yuendumu. <i>Last day to write to your child at Yulara.</i>
Day 6	Thursday	21 st September	In Yuendumu
Day 7	Friday	22 nd September	In Yuendumu
Day 8	Saturday	23 rd September	Yuendumu to Alice Springs.
Day 9	Sunday 332 km	24 th September	In Alice Springs
Day 10	Monday 446 km	25 th September	Alice Springs to Yulara (Uluru) <i>Last day to pick up letters at Alice Springs.</i>
Day 11	Tuesday	26 th September	In Yulara
Day 12	Wednesday 485 km	27 th September	Yulara to Bush camp. <i>Last day to pick up letters at Uluru.</i> ▲
Day 13	Thursday 270 km	28 th September	Bush Camp to Coober Pedy
Day 14	Friday 480 km	20 th September	Coober Pedy to bush camp past Pimba ▲
Day 15	Saturday 441 km	30 th September	Bush Camp to Murray Bridge
Day 16	Sunday 700 km	1 st October	Murray Bridge to Melbourne - arrive 7.00pm.