

Monday 5 October 2009

After such a long and exhausting day of travelling on Sunday, Monday proved to be a whole lot more relaxing. After a much needed good night's rest, the team were woken bright and early at 7am for a 30-minute easy-paced jog through the streets of Queanbeyan, a small blue-collar town approximately 15 minutes from Canberra. It is interesting to note that it is actually located in New South Wales, demonstrating just how small the state of ACT is.

After the jog, the kids were treated to hearty full-cooked breakfasts, which were delivered to their rooms! At around 11am the team headed out in their two rental vans, bound for a day of exploring the wonderful sites of Canberra, Australia's capital city.

The first stop was a quick look at the rink, located in a largely industrial suburb called Phillip. The kids were amazed at just how spread out the city is, with often quite lengthy drives on highways between various suburbs, filled in with thick native bush. The rink itself is quite small, similar to Avondale in its size, age and facilities. Taylor Kennedy thought himself the luckiest man alive when he discovered a piece of clothing in a recycling bin that he took an instant liking to. The team then walked over to a local mall for lunch and a bit of a look around.

The next stop was the Australian War Memorial Museum, located just a few minutes away from the centre of Canberra city. On the way, the team vans drove past Capital Hill, a pentagon-shaped building surrounded by a large roundabout, where Australia's parliament assembles. The Museum was a couple of minutes further down the road. The team were split into three groups and head coach Jonathan Albright challenged each team to take as many photos of things relating to New Zealand in the museum as they could. Not only did this encourage the kids to actually READ the displays, but to also educate them further about New Zealand's historical and influential relationship with Australia in wars throughout both countries' histories,

The museum was well laid-out with plenty of interactive displays. Highlights included the ANZAC hall, the WW1 and WW2 halls, and the aircraft displays. The team spent a good few hours wandering the halls. When the team was eventually round up (no thanks to parent/supporter Ross Burns who went AWOL!) you could really sense the pride and honour felt by the players to learn about New Zealand's long history with Australia and the wars they had fought together,

The team eventually headed back towards their accommodation. As it was a public holiday in Australia (Labour Day here is celebrated on the 1st Monday of October) virtually all of town was closed, and the only option for dinner, much to the delight of the players, was to get pizza delivered. This was quickly devoured. Little did the kids know that several hours later, they were to participate in the team's annual milk chug. Special mentions must go to Shaun Harrison and Callum Jansson. The kids eventually settled into their rooms, excited about the prospect of their first game against ACT tomorrow night.

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