

# Diary Linfield College's 2013 Top of Australia Study Tour

*Studying environmental economics and taking in Kakadu, Gove and Cape Tribulation*

## Stage 1 — Darwin

### Day 1

Friday, 11<sup>th</sup> January

Sydney – Darwin - Riyala.

Today we arrived in Darwin after a four-hour flight from Sydney. We were surprised by how hot and humid the weather is here. John and Ian greeted us at the airport where we all departed on a bus. It was a cramped bus filled with 17 people and all of our luggage.

Our first stop was the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. We were glad it was air-conditioned. There we saw various artwork from the aborigines and more contemporary art by Australians. The aboriginal artwork was unique and impressive to our eyes. In the museum were also exhibits of Cyclone Tracy that displayed the damage of the event and stories of the people that lived through it. This exhibit featured a hurricane sound room that was unnerving to experience. A large portion of the museum was dedicated to flora and fauna from around the area, covering early life periods on earth to present day. Much of this exhibit held poisonous and deadly creatures. The maritime exhibit displayed boats that were used for trade, transportation, and fishing that were used throughout Australia's History. We were able to see how the boats were crafted compared to more modern boats. This museum was an excellent introduction to the Northern Territory of Australia.

Our museum visit was followed by a narrated tour of the Darwin area. Ian and John proved themselves to be as knowledgeable and humorous as our professor had described. With the bus now air conditioned we made our journey happily to Riyala.

When we arrived we were greeted by wallabies and beautiful surroundings of a little tropical oasis. After settling in we relaxed with an assortment of cheeses and wine, which was shortly followed by a fabulous meal cooked by Su. Our class continued to socialize after we were done with our meals. We went to bed relaxed and excited for our next adventure.

### Day 2

Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> January

Territory Wildlife Park

Upon arriving at the Territory Wildlife Park we were immediately launched into several of the shows. To begin we were able to take part in feeding the Pelicans. During this process the half dozen Pelicans put on quite a display of the wings and water skiing abilities. Also in this location we saw several turtles, an assortment of birds, and a croc.

After feeding time was over we moved on to the Aquarium. In this location we were exposed to an array of different Aquatic animals including the Sawfish, Mud Crabs, and Rockfish.

We moved quickly through in order to see the feeding of the animals in the Ooloo Sandbar. Here the ranger explained the animals that were in this location. The Barramundi were impressive by their method of consumption. They use the method of implosion to get the fish into their bodies quickly. Next animal to blow our minds was the Archer fish and their ability to shoot water at a bug two meter above the surface of the water. Lastly the whip rays which some of us were allowed to feed were surprisingly gentle when it came from taking a fish from your hands. They also had a rough top and smooth underside. After this exciting show we moved to the shy Dingoes. Then we went to the Flight Deck and learned about the types of birds kept there. We learned about ospreys, Jabiru, an owl with a flat, fat, circular face, and other birds. After the show we asked questions from the bird handlers as they each held an eagle.

From the flight deck we went to an amazing lunch of dino-nuggets and other assorted items. Following lunch, the group split up to explore the park at our own leisure. Although, we travelled through the exhibits at different paces, we explored similar attractions including: the nocturnal house, the monsoon walk, and the Goose Lagoon, each containing different creatures completely foreign to us Oregonians.

The Wildlife Park was a great experience for our group and example of effective government subsidy.

Former Lord Mayor of Darwin, Graeme Sawyer, a mate of Ian's gave us a presentation after dinner on what makes Darwin Tick.

**Day 3**  
**Sunday, 13<sup>th</sup> January**  
**Litchfield National Park**

On the drive over to Litchfield National Park, we passed through a small town whose name escapes us. Seeing a more rural town in Australia was an interesting sight, particularly the castle and horses in the yards.

Then we got to stop at termite mounds. We saw cathedral and meridian termite mounds, both of which were giant and impressive. It was interesting that the mounds were 50 years old and that ants had moved in when the termites left.

Our second stop was Buley Swimming Pools (not sure on the name). We started our expedition having tea, hot cocoa, and coffee with cookies to munch on. The snacks were much appreciated. The water was cool and refreshing. The landscape was beautiful and the area was clearly a recreation area for natives. We thoroughly enjoyed jumping into the water, swimming, and having a chance to cool off and relax in the water.

Then we drove to Wangi Falls. We could not swim in the pool, but got a chance to hike through a rainforest. We saw bats, a wallaby, and giant spiders on our hike while in a torrential downpour. Then we had a wonderful lunch of sandwiches, thankfully under a dry covered area.

We all got plenty to eat and then drove to the Florence Falls. After a beautiful walk along the creek we arrived at a gorgeous waterfall. Some of us swam around, others climbed and jumped off the cliffs. Fun was had by all. The return hike, while short, provided a spectacular view of the falls from above.

We arrived back at the van happy and soaked. Some of us unfortunately were sunburned by the day's activities. Our Oregon skin is not used to a giant ball of fire in the sky actually shining through the clouds. While we journeyed back home, amidst conversations pertaining to books, movies, and family, we stopped to admire flowers by the side of the road and passed a Dingo that had fallen prey to the automobiles. Happy hour contained great food and card games. Dinner was delicious. We can all proudly say we ate kangaroo.

Our speaker was Gregory Lionel Miles (aka Cec), a veteran park ranger of Kakadu national park. He spoke to us about the illogical policies of the

Australian government concerning the management of Australia's wildlife. Primarily the rare and threatened endemic species of Australia. The law currently does not allow for private ownership, breeding, or export of these animals or other exotic animals native to Australia. There are ways to obtain a license to breed species, however it is an arduous process that requires renewal of the license each year. The license is required even for animals bred in captivity, or simply animal pelts or eggs. There is an extraordinary amount of money not being earned by Australia because of the government's refusal to allow the sale or exportation of its rare species. We look forward to exploring Kakadu in the days to come.

**Stage 2 — Kakadu**

**Day 4**  
**Monday, 14<sup>th</sup> January**  
**Riyala – Kakadu — Jabiru**

We began our journey to Kakadu National Park promptly at 9:00am. During our bus ride, Ian proved to be a wonderful resource of interesting information about the land and people around us. The first interesting point of information was about the Uranium mine that is in the middle of the park and has been functioning for over 30 years. This was ironic because the park itself would not exist if the radioactive uranium was not discovered.

At 10:00am we had "Smoko" at Adelaide River which consisted of tea, coffee, and macadamia nut cookies.

After we had rested, we learned about the rich gold fields between Adelaide and Pine Creek. We found it very interesting that the Chinese miners had to push wheelbarrows hundreds of miles to access the gold fields. We were intrigued to learn that the gold miners paid the Aboriginals in tobacco, alcohol, and opium, which they became addicted to and kept returning for.

We stopped for lunch near the entrance of Kakadu National Park, where we had sandwiches and fruitcake. We had the opportunity to explore a learning centre concerning aboriginal culture.

After our lunch stop, we took a short drive to an unmarked swimming hole that Ian knew about, which it turned out that John had not swam in ever. The cool water was very refreshing for all of us,

even though we had to battle some very large spiders to access an opening. After our swim, we went after cold water at a nearby ranger station, which featured unique art from local historical equipment.

We stopped at the Cooina (Yellow Waters) Resort that had iced coffee which Ian said would “put hair on your chest.”

From there it was on to Jabiru where we took a scenic drive around the town, and became familiar with the man-made lake.

Once we picked up our keys, we settled into our luxurious bungalows and got ready for happy hour. We all enjoyed the happy hour with good conversations over good wine and crackers. For dinner we had amazing stir-fry prepared by Sue, and topped it off with grapes and a custard-like sauce.

After we finished dinner and dessert, we made our way back to our “fungalows”, but not before being startled by a carpet python. Ian gave a very interesting on-the-spot talk about how to handle the snake and showed us how friendly they are. That concluded day 4 of our adventure with Ian and John, or Uncle Longnose and FL.

## Day 5

### Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> January

#### Kakadu National Park — Nourlangie

Today we ventured into the Kakadu National Park for our first full day here. Before we were able to load the bus, JB and Kara spotted an Olive Python catching its breakfast, a large mamma possum. We then were enthralled for an entire meal! Watching its ears and limbs slowly disappear we took way too many pictures and were disgusted yet amazed at how such a large animal could fit in that skinny snake.

Finally, the journey started at Nourlangie Rock. As we first pulled up we spotted a family of wallabies watching us curiously in the parking lot. And as tourists do, we took lots of pictures. Ian put us on the lookout for the black wallaroo, or barrk, unique to this area of the park.

We first visited an occupation site that has been used by aboriginals to stay out of the monsoon weather for over 21,000 years. This was our first encounter with the aboriginal rock paintings. The point of these paintings was to communicate a story. These stories were passed down through

generations and were even painted over with other paintings. One collection of art stood out because of its story, lightning man a.k.a. Namarrkurn. We then took a small hike up to a lookout where we could see the three pillars where the lightning man legend lives.

Our next stop was Nawulandja Lookout. But that was not the end because Ian led us on what seems like a wild goose chase. Dripping with sweat we arrived at an overhanging rock creating a perfect spot to view aboriginal x-ray art. These paintings were not only untouched by the influence of tourism but also are the oldest examples yet to be discovered.

After another Amazing Su lunch with sandwiches, we made our way to the Yellow Water or Ngurrungurrutjpu for a boat excursion. Mandy Muir and Ian Morris pointed out all sorts of animals and plants along the way and we encountered a ridiculously large number of crocodiles and even watched one TRY to catch a fish.

We then sought out the relief of air conditioning in the Warradjen Cultural Centre where we saw an exhibit based on the aboriginal experiences with their environment and foreigners. It was interesting to read about the uses of things such as paper bark. We were also fascinated by the mixed responses to the introduction of gold mining in Pine Creek. There were good responses with the education brought to aboriginal children.

We had another Amazing Su meal of Asian stir fry followed by us mobbing with our chairs to a space where Ian shared some of his knowledge of aboriginal and Australian history and relationship. He focused especially on the aboriginal relationship and exchange with the environment. Then we enjoyed a ridiculously precious sleep filled with fluffy pillows and air conditioning.

Quote: “*That’s almost a medical condition*” – Ian Morris regarding Andrew Gladhill’s laugh.

**Day 6**  
**Wednesday, 16<sup>th</sup> January**  
**Kakadu National Park – Ubirr**

Today we went to Ubirr with Victor Cooper. We saw various rock art. We saw rock art that appeared to be inaccessible on a rock overhang. It was explained to us by Victor that the aborigines believe a Mimi spirit painted that particular rock art. Then we ventured to the East Alligator crossing that separates Kakadu and Arnhem land. We were told a story related to that crossing about a crocodile named Eric and his fascination with dogs. Before we returned to camp for lunch, we drove by the Ranger Mine in Kakadu that mines Uranium.

After, a brief look at the mine and a great lunch prepared by Amazing Su, we went to the Bowali Visitor Center to listen to Ian's talk on Aboriginal Kinship in the Northern Territories. We learned about the complex relationship network that the Aboriginal people use. Ian explained the marital arrangements of Aborigines, and specific behavioural interactions between clan members.

Following Ian's talk we toured the Visitors Center's exhibits. The displays were mostly full of native animals to the Northern Territory and their environments.

Next, we returned to Lakeview Park for dinner made by Amazing Su and reported to Cabin 10 for an economic discussion and story time by Ian. As a group, we discussed the differences in Aboriginal and Western economic thought. Ian told us several exciting stories from throughout his past. However, the most exciting story was about being bitten by a Death Adder and surviving without a trip to a conventional hospital. The night ended with a lightning storm that began off in the distance and soon was over our heads. During the night many of us were awoken by a large lightning strike close to camp and a thundering boom to accompany.

**Day 7,**  
**Thursday, 17<sup>th</sup> January**  
**Kakadu – Gubara - Riyala**

This morning some of our group went on a scenic flight tour of Kakadu National Park. We got to see some really great views and captured some amazing photos. We first flew over Jim Jim Falls, which unfortunately was covered with a few clouds, but we took some great pictures anyway. Then we flew over Twin Falls which was spectacular, and made our way over to Double Falls and then continued on our way back to the Hole in the Wall Falls, which came straight out of the rock. We also got to see a great view of Lighting Dreaming which is a sacred Aboriginal site, and then we continued into Jabiru and got a great oversight of the Ranger Mine which is an active Uranium mine. Once we landed everyone was glad to have their feet back on the ground.

Once the fliers got back to Lakeview Lodge, everyone piled in the bus and headed off to Gubara for some hiking and swimming. When we arrived at Gubara, Ian showed us one of Australia's most colourful grasshoppers.

Then we continued our journey which was a 3.2 kilometer long hike to a secluded waterhole. The water was amazingly cool and clean, so we could cool off from the hot sun and even fill up our water bottles. Some of us journeyed a bit farther to a "honeymoon" waterfall and rock pool, which was amazing!! On the way out of the pool we even saw a cousin of the Komodo dragon swimming right where we got out! His name was Eric. After we finished swimming we started back to the bus and then started our journey back to Riyala.

We made a pit stop at Fogg Dam and saw a long neck turtle, as well as a variety of native Australian birds, and a family of wallabies.

After making a stop for groceries we went back to Riyala for dinner, which one of Su's friends made for us. After we had mango sorbet for desserts and an intense game of "Touretts". Then we headed off to bed before our 4 am "sparrows" departure.

**Stage 3 — Gove Peninsula****Day 8****Friday Thursday, 18<sup>th</sup> January****Darwin - Gove - Dhimurru Rangers**

We woke up early in the morning to leave for the airport and fly to Gove. There were beautiful clouds we got see out the window. Upon arriving at the hotel, we had some time to relax and visit the bakery and store which was appreciated.

Then we loaded up in the 4 wheel drive vehicles and started our 3 hour trek to Cape Arnhem and The Penthouse. We met with Dhimurru Rangers along the way and had stops to admire the view and make adjustments as necessary.

The scenery was beautiful (albeit bumpy). Seeing a net washed up on shore was informative. The explanation of the sea turtle recovery system, with the helicopters to spot the turtles and the nets was very interesting. The fact it costs \$1,400 an hour to rent a helicopter is crazy! The Penthouse was a beautiful beach. Playing in the surf and sand for a couple hours while waiting for the tide was wonderful. There were sea lice that really nip you in the buns. We made videos and dug holes in the sand.

We got to meet Jess who was the daughter of the Executive Officer Steve. Talking to her about going to school and being a marine biologist was cool. Hearing more about the operation of the park including the costs of maintenance and the limitations on people coming into the park was good. It was fascinating to hear about the permit system the park implements. Particularly because in America a coastline this scenic and nice would probably be developed with hotels, condos, and shops. The beach was probably the most beautiful beach we have ever seen. And definitely the most secluded. It was amazing and pretty. Then we began driving back to the hotel for the evening.

Along the way we had our fair share of adventures. Sue almost flipped a car, which caused a lot of excitement but nobody was hurt so it was okay. And John didn't have to pay \$5,000 for the insurance. The cars were bumping about on the road which was a lot of fun, but also got tiresome after over 90 minutes.

Once we returned to the hotel, we had to wait for dinner. There was plenty of time for rest and relaxation both of which were very appreciated. Pasta and meat sauce with salad followed by Lammingtons was our delicious dinner.

**Day 9****Saturday, 19<sup>th</sup> January****Gove — Yirrakala**

We woke up today to be greeted by Steve for breakfast. He shared more information with us about the area's past and present condition. In our discussion, we compared the status of Australian aborigines to native Americans in Oregon. Another item we compared was the management of crocodiles in Northern Territory versus wolves in the northwest states. It was interesting to compare similarities and differences between the cultures and practices.

Our next item on the agenda was to visit the Yirrakala Art Centre. Kade, one of the presidents, greeted us with a quick overview of the Yirrakala Art Centre's role within the community. We were then able to watch a quick video that brought Kade's words to life. The video demonstrated the process the artists go through to make the art and how the centre is used as a means to preserve the culture and history for the younger generation. After gaining more insight, Kade introduced us to an annex of the museum that was designed specifically to display the fundamental panels of Dhuwa and Yirritja. These panels were originally given to and then thrown away by the local church. The art centre was lucky enough to save and refurbish these pieces to put on display for the community. They explain the clans within the moieties where the signature styles of each clan is represented. When we look at the paintings, we are in awe of the amount of culture that is contained within these paintings. It is breathtaking to think that any aboriginal can look at these paintings and see their story. As we personally explored the museum, we discovered new pieces with each pass. Every one of us found a way to connect with the art and the people. We bought pieces, listened to aboriginals play didgiridu (and attempted to play ourselves), and watched videos along with the kids come to hang out for the day.

After lunch and a walk on the beach, we made our way to a local banana plantation. We were greeted by slobbery dogs, delicious bananas, and fresh fruit juices. Yum! The couple who owned the plantation, Bruce and Allison, gave us a walk through the banana trees. Along the way Bruce showed and explained the maintenance and harvest processes necessary to produce 70 crates of bananas every other week. Bruce shared stories of his struggles dealing with cyclones and panama

disease. We learned that granite is helps prevent panama disease. Bananas are the most coveted fruit in Australia.

A couple of us stayed back to shuck our own coconuts, drink the milk, and eat the raw coconut. This trip is starting to feel like we are ticking a lot of things off of our bucket lists.

### **Day 10** **Sunday, 20<sup>th</sup> January** **Gove — Nhulunbuy**

On Sunday morning we attended Nhulunbuy Uniting Church. It showed us a different side of the community that we had not yet seen. After the service we were able to talk with the congregation.

Outside the church John bought some aboriginal artwork.

After lunch we headed to East Woody Beach, where we were pelted with a small rainstorm. We spent a couple hours walking the shore and checking out the marine life.

Following the beach we headed over to the Bauxite mine to see the massive operation and watch a freighter be unloaded at the wharf. Ian explained the history of the land that the mine is on, and pointed out the massive settling pond off in the distance.

Then we took a small detour to visit an aboriginal neighbourhood near the mine. We were welcomed by one of Ian's former students, and given a blessing for good health by a yidaki (didjeridoo). They brought out some art to show and Randy and John both bought pieces to take home. We also ran into the Dhimurru ranger that escorted us out of Cape Arnhem.

Next, we went to the Gove Yacht Club and we met with a couple teachers that are friends of Ian. They told us about the education system in Australia and the benefits they receive for teaching in small rural areas.

The rest of our evening was spent eating dinner and packing up for our trip to Cairns.

## **Stage 4 Cairns Wet Tropics**

### **Day 11**

### **Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> January** **Gove - Cairns - Holloways Beach**

Upon awaking we departed our hotel to the Gove airport, and flew to Cairns. Then we got to Holloways Beach, a kids camp at which we are staying during our time in Cairns. It is infested by mosquitos, but the AC is wonderful.

Once we settled in a bit, we left for the TTNQ (Tourism Tropical North Queensland) office in downtown Cairns. We heard from Elizabeth, a wonderful speaker who told us about the organization's efforts to attract tourists to Cairns and their success levels and strategies with different markets based on geographic location. It was really interesting and informative with pretty pictures.

After singing happy birthday to Elizabeth, we were let loose on Cairns. Having a chance to shop and explore a city was quite nice and appreciated after several days in the bush. We found many souvenir shops and got gifts for ourselves or friends and family. Some also had a chance to mail things at the post office which was nice. Sydney really enjoyed a \$6 coffee and relaxing in a coffee shop.

We all met up again at the Night Markets to have dinner courtesy of our wonderful Fearless Leader. Then we had additional free time to explore the Night Markets and surrounding area. Trevor, Jay, and Emmett happily got massages (which left them a little sore). The city of Cairns had a touristy feel, albeit an appealing one. We also had a chance to relax at a local bar and have a few a drinks. Some time spent downtown in a city was a major change from the rest of our Australia experience since leaving Sydney, and we were very glad to have it.

Once we returned to Holloway Beach Environmental Education Centre, we all headed to bed to rest up for the days to come.

**Day 12****Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January****Skyrail – Barron – Atherton Tablelands**

Today we woke up, and headed off to the Skyrail, which was about an hour away from our current lodging. After waiting for the ticket counter to open we finally received our day pass to go up the mountain, through the beautiful rainforests of Cairns. The Skyrail was a lot like a gondola that you find in the Swiss Alps. We soared over the rainforest canopy and took some time to explore and admire the flora and fauna of the landscape. After three incredible stops, it began to pour and we got a very natural taste of the rainforest ecosystem. Once we loaded the bus to head off to our next destination, John talked about the tourism town at the top of the mountain that has its economy fuelled by the tourists visiting the Skyrail. Over the years, he has seen an incredible shift in the face of the town ever since this tourism hot-spot was established.

We met up with Bryan and Evisal who work on the Green Corridor Project. This project was established to help correct the problems associated with the Barron River. These problems included bank erosion, habitat degradation, and poor water quality flowing to the reef. They have replanted vegetation and built a catchment basin to collect sediments before they run off into the river. The catchment basin has also helped the infrastructure of the town by limiting the amount of flooding that occurs on the highway. Some of us got soaked while walking through the basin, but it was a very informational talk.

After we left the Barron River catchment basin, we headed over to Lake Eacham to have lunch and take a swim. Another solid meal of sandwiches were eaten by all, and some of the group split off to take a dip.

On our drive home, we took the scenic route down the Atherton Tablelands and came back for a great dinner prepared by Amazing Su and her niece, Barbara.

**Day 13****Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> January****Frankland Islands ??? Babinda**

Today we woke up with excitement as we were anxious to head for the Great Barrier Reef. The bus ride was about an hour and a half.

As we arrived at the edge of the river, we were greeted by a huge catamaran. The crew was very friendly as they ran through the safety guidelines with us. When the safety instructions ended, we made our way down river for the Franklin Islands. Many of us stood out on the bow of the ship to drink our tea and enjoy the warm rain. As we got to the mouth of the river, the wind picked up and the waves were very choppy. We were required to stay inside during this part. After a couple of minutes of swells that were rocking the boat violently, we were informed that the trip was cancelled and would be turning around shortly.

We were disappointed on the drive back up the river because of the lost opportunity. However, with one door closing another opened. We headed for Babinda where we drove just outside of town to visit the Babinda Boulders. The swimming pools that were supposed to be calm and clear were filled with dirty water and strong currents. Therefore, there would be no swimming at this area. We were able to walk around the trails and see the gorgeous views of the waterfall. There were some monstrous spiders to see as well. Everyone was pretty impressed by size of this one spider.

After getting dumped on continually by rain at the falls, we took the bus back into town and ate at a local café where. Many people ordered some type of burgers. None of us knew how huge they were either. The burger must have weighed a couple of pounds. Needless to say, we were all very full after that meal.

With our bellies stuffed full, we made our way out to one last waterfall, Josephine Falls. The currents were as strong and water as dirty as Babinda Boulders. It was still a very beautiful site to see. We then made our way back to the Education Center, with a quick stop at the store in town so that

Amazing Su could pick up a couple of groceries. It was our last night at the camp and we celebrated it by getting to bed early. The day didn't turned out as we had planned, but it brought a new adventure and experience that was all part of the ride.

**Day 14**  
**Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> January**  
**Cairns to Cape Tribulation**

Continuing our adventure we headed to Cape Tribulation. On the way we made many stops.

Our first stop was at a Wildlife Habitat Park. We got to see animals that we had not been fortunate enough to see previously. Such as, tree kangaroos, koalas, cassowaries, and many more exciting animals. We also had the opportunity to feed many marsupials while getting soaked in the process.

Then we got back on the bus and stopped at Mossman for lunch and quick walk around town. Just down the road we stopped at a lookout to see the view. We saw the twin islands that are owned by a variety of celebrities.

After lunch in Mossman, we took the ferry across the river and then went on a rainforest walk. We saw a type of dragon and Ian led us over a perilous cliff, just kidding, we climbed over a fallen tree that broke the boardwalk. On this walk we saw primitive Australian flora.

Then we arrived in Cape Tribulation. Where we were culture shocked by primitive accommodations and Hugh Spencer scantily clad in a bedsheet. We saw the flying foxes being fed by Hugh and then we had a great dinner. We had dessert which included many tropical fruits that we had never tried before. We were privileged to hear Hugh rant about Phosphorous and climate change.

The rest of the night, amidst the windstorm, was filled with an extended happy hour and fell asleep among the spiders. We will leave you with the motto of Cape Tribulation: Everything takes longer than you expect, even when you expect it to take longer than you expect.

**Day 15**  
**Friday 25<sup>th</sup> January**  
**Cape Tribulation**

Today we woke up and had breakfast. We then walked through the rainforest guided by Dr Hugh Spencer who told us all about the rainforest and the many plants and animals it contains in great detail. The path was fairly cluttered and damaged from fungus and the storm from the previous night. Ants were everywhere and annoying, but the walk was informational and enjoyable. We then had an opportunity to snorkel at the beach with provided stinger suits and snorkel gear which was much appreciated. Getting to see a little of the reef was grand. Others walked along the beach and found a cold freshwater creek they believe was spring fed.

After our adventures through the rainforest and on the beach we journeyed back to the research centre for lunch.

Our Fearless Leader (FL) then led us through a mangrove forest and took us to Cape Tribulation. After having more time to explore and relax on the beach, we stopped by the convenience store and bottleshop. Some of us got beer. We came back to the research centre and relaxed in the creek or worked on bush poetry and journals.

After a very filling happy hour we enjoyed our final meal cooked by The Amazing Sue. We have thoroughly enjoyed her cooking on this trip.

Followed by dinner we had skits and bush poetry. We have all had wonderful time here in Australia. We would like to thank our wonderful guides once again for all their hard work, fascinating talks and stories, and great adventures. Our Australia experience has been eye opening incredible.