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Back then

In 1992, Broken Hill United Soccer Club held a reunion for past players dating back to 1946.

Taste of the outback



Visiting Year 9 MLC students Tiana Gutierrez, Mary Pilkinton, Sreya Parakala, Sophia Costantino and Elizabeth Chen were introduced to a local favourite yesterday when they learnt how to make Jonny Cakes at BHHS. **PICTURE:** Nick Gibbs

By Nick Gibbs

Officially it's in the same state, but for the inner Sydney students of Methodist Ladies College, Broken Hill might as well be foreign soil.

Forty-two girls and six teachers arrived in the city last week for a taste of outback life as part of an exchange run with Broken Hill High School.

For Milly Dale, Maekayla Tran and Imogen Locke-Sodhi, the opportunity was

unlike anything they had experienced.

"It's really different to what I expected," Milly said, noting the variation between a regional public school and MLC as confronting as the landscape.

"It was a shock to see the difference."

According to Imogen, the friendly country atmosphere and connection to the land was a noticeable change.

"It feels like there's a greater sense of community here," she said, pointing out the abundance of space compared with Sydney.

Over 12 hours on a bus and train left no uncertainty of the remoteness of their new surroundings.

Controlling food

budgets and taking control of everyday tasks such as cooking and cleaning also helped expose the students to the realities of independence.

Comparing supermarket items to find the best value for money helped increase awareness on the costs of eating well, reported Maekayla.

She said the shared living experience also helped build cooperation between classmates.

"You learn how to work in a team," she said.

The group agreed seeing the local mining history up close at White Cliffs and Daydream Mine was a favourite excursion so far.

MLC teachers Mike Hayes and Rosanne

Thompson said the program, which has been running for over a decade, was often picked as a highlight of student's time at the college.

"They appreciate it a lot more in their senior years," Ms Thompson said.

"When we ask our year 12s what they remember best, Broken Hill is often mentioned," added Mr Hayes.

He said the new experience coupled with a chance to build social skills, foster independence and push the boundaries of their comfort zone was invaluable for students.

"For a lot it's the longest they've been without their parents," he said.

A total of three

groups from MLC will spend two weeks in the city this year, with local students having the chance to travel to Sydney in August.

Coordinating the program from BHHS is teacher Bianca Horne, who said the exchange was something students looked forward to every year.

"Our girls love it, when they're finishing year eight they'll be saying we've got MLC next year," she said.

Thirty local girls will make the return trip from August 19-25 and fundraising is currently underway to help cover costs.

A cake stall will be held in town square on Saturday, June 21 as part of money raising efforts.

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Lonely users get personal

People inclined to disclose personal information on Facebook may be lonely, according to recent research by Charles Sturt University.

Associate Professor Yeslam Al-Saggaf, from CSU's School of Computing and Mathematics, and Director of the Quantitative Consulting Unit in the CSU Research Office Sharon Nielsen wanted to find out if there was a relationship between loneliness and self disclosure on social networking sites.

They studied data collected from more than 600 female Facebook users whose profiles were publicly available online, and Professor Al-Saggaf believes the findings are equally applicable to men.

"We collected information from 308 users who indicated they were feeling 'lonely' and 308 users who said they felt 'connected' to other people on their profile status," said Prof. Al-Saggaf.

The researchers examined the amount of information that both groups revealed and found that the 'lonely' users disclosed more personal and relationship information publicly than the 'connected' users.

"More than 79 per cent of the 'lonely' users disclosed personal information, such as their favourite books and movies, compared with less than 65 per cent of the 'connected' group," Prof. Al-Saggaf said.

"Nearly 98 per cent of the 'lonely' users shared relationship status publicly.

"It makes sense that the people who felt lonely would disclose this type of information, since they want to make it easier for others to initiate contact with them, which may help them overcome their feelings of loneliness."

On the other hand, more people who felt 'connected' shared their views on politics and religion than people who felt lonely.

"I felt that if people were lonely they reveal more information to reach out and feel connected but I don't know for sure," Prof. Al-Saggaf said.

"We want to do more studies into this issue.

"But if people were to engage in physical activities, they may overcome their feelings of loneliness."

The research will be published in the July issue of the journal of Computers in Human Behaviour.