National Youth Science Forum

Last June we underwent several rigorous interview processes and were eventually accepted as 2 of the 143 students to attend the National Youth Science Forum (NYSF), Session B, in Perth. On 10 January 2011 we flew from Adelaide to Perth and were taken to Currie Hall, the college residence of the University of Western Australia, where we stayed for the next 2 weeks.

The NYSF was crammed with both academic and social activities, and most nights we were up late playing games or viciously fighting it out for the winning title on quiz night. Some of our favourite daytime activities included swimming in the Indian Ocean, going to the zoo, a picnic at Fremantle, a nerdy disco and the swinging bush dance. During the day we travelled by bus around Perth to various laboratories and scientific institutions. On these lab visits we made our own lip gloss and hand cream, talked about toxic chemicals, or looked at skin and fingerprints under a microscope. We attended lectures from universities about the universe and laser technology. There were also some more serious events such as the Science and Rotary Club dinner. Here we were spoken to by the winner of the Prime Minister’s 2010 Physics Prize, Kate Trinajstic, and mingled with distinguished scientists. There were numerous scientific debates on controversial issues, with some people becoming very heated when discussing topics such as the growing of rice in Australia or growing organs from stem cells.

The NYSF may have left us with intense cases of sleep deprivation and severe post-NYSF depression, but it was an experience of a lifetime. Not only did it engage our brains but broadened our way of thinking and gave us lifelong friends. Session B was a place where it was cool to be a geek, and we came from all over Australia to share ideas and have some fun.

Amy and Nara
(both Yr 12)