The Pembroke First XI Boys Hockey Tour to Perth during 21–27 June was an overwhelming success.

The purpose of the trip was for the boys to immerse themselves in the unique Hockey culture of Perth and in doing so improve their own skills and team playing style.

We were fortunate to receive two training sessions by three famous Australian Hockey players: Tristram Woodhouse, Grant Schubert and Graeme Begbie. It was a brilliant opportunity for our boys to learn from these players.

Following his session, Grant Schubert, originally from Loxton, brought out his Olympic gold medal from the Athens Games and then gave away one of his Kookaburra playing singlets and shorts. He later returned with a bag of his Kookaburras playing socks for our boys.

The coaching sessions were invaluable. The boys learned some new skills in a variety of engaging drills such as V drags, air drags, 3D skills, short-handled goal shots and team skills such as out-letting.

The team played three games and were wonderfully received by our host schools, Aquinas College, Hale School and Trinity College.

Our first game against Aquinas was superb. We jumped to a 2-0 lead early in the first half, with goals from Marcus and Elliot. Aquinas responded with 2 goals just before half-time and managed to score early in the second half. Pembroke got back to 3-3 after an excellent set piece from a penalty corner, finished nicely by Taylor. Unfortunately, Aquinas scored in the last 20 seconds and won the game 4-3.

Our second game was going to be much more difficult. Hale School is the dominant school in Boys Hockey in Perth. Our boys played a solid first half, holding them to 1-1 at half-time. We scored from a brilliant diving back-stick goal from the youngest player in our team, Raeph. However, in the second half Hale showed why they are the number one Hockey school, piling on 6 goals! Final score, 7-1 loss.

Our boys were extremely determined to win the third game against Trinity. We played this game at the Perth Hockey Stadium, the best in Australia. It is the Hockey equivalent of playing at the MCG! It was a brilliant game and the score was 2-1 our way at half-time, with brilliant goals scored by Jesse and Marcus. In the second half, Trinity scored the next goal and we were locked at 2-2 until Taylor knocked in another goal with 10 minutes to go. We eventually held on for a magnificent 4-3 victory.

In between the training session and the games, the team visited a number of tourist sites in Perth including Kings Park, Cottesloe Beach and Fremantle. On the Saturday night we caught up with Fremantle Docker player and recent old scholar, Alex Forster, at the Fremantle vs Essendon match. Alex and his family, who were visiting, came to watch our boys play against Hale. Alex gave us a signed Fremantle Dockers guernsey to pass on to the School.

Perth has the best Hockey club competition in the world, so we also watched five Toyota League Hockey matches, including seeing Grant Schubert play, which was a real highlight. We also watched the Australian Women’s Hockey team, the Hockeyroos, train and were taken on an excellent tour of the AIS Hockey facilities.

All in all it was a wonderful trip, achieving everything that we had hoped. Well done to all the players. They embraced every experience and opportunity and their behaviour and attitude were outstanding.

Finally, special thanks to our Co-Coach, manager and bus driver, Mr Jaimie Holland, whose expertise and support was greatly appreciated by all.

We look forward to conducting a similar trip in 2014.

Mr Roberts
First XI Boys Hockey Coach