

## NYSF Australia 2011 - Canberra

Wed, 2011-01-05 00:00 -- Dominic Tremblay



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It is the end of our third day at the NYSF. The coach trip was long, but exciting. We left just after dinner, and travelled overnight and into the next day. The coach was solely for NYSFers, and we kept stopping to pick people up along the way. As a result, I met so many new people. We were all really excited, and so we spent a lot of time talking, but even more time sleeping! Along the way, we stopped for breakfast, for a swimming break, and for lunch & a game of cricket. I think I'm finally starting to understand the rules of cricket ... I've only played twice ? the first time was at Isabella's with Darcy.

On the last leg of the bus trip, the Staffies (the group of NYSFers from last year that help run the program this year, including Nathan, our host from Inverell) joined us on the bus and taught us crazy chants and cheers. It felt a lot like summer camp ? what a blast!

We spent the afternoon after we arrived playing games to get to know each other, including super-mega-ninja-destruction, a game which involves making lightning-fast ninja-strikes and ninja-dodges to eliminate opponents. I can tell that this will become a hallmark of our NYSF experience ? we play every chance we get!

At night, we got together in floor groups for more name-learning and bonding. We ate ice-cream and drank a delicious Australian favourite, Milo!

The next day, I went on my first lab visit to a deep-space probe tracking station. Huge radio-telescopes and dishes are used to communicate with space probes, like Voyager I and II, which are now nearing the edge of our solar system. It was this station which received the video feed from the Apollo 11 mission when Neil Armstrong first landed on the moon.

Today, we had our opening ceremony at the Australian Parliament. After the ceremony, we got a tour. We saw the House of Representatives and the Senate, and then, best of all, we got to simulate a committee meeting and a Senate debate concerning a bill on water-recycling! It was very interesting to see the similarities and differences between the Australian and Canadian parliamentary systems, and it was a lot of fun getting to express our opinions on an important issue in Parliamentary style.

Finally, we got to go to a bush dance around dinner time. We drove out to a woolshed, put on some folk music, and learned how to square dance! All 150+ NYSFers were stamping and shaking, crashing into each other and generally making fools of ourselves. Most of the time, we couldn't hear the instructions, and so we flailed about randomly, trying desperately to copy nearby groups that appeared to know what they were doing. Our group resorted to the chicken dance on more than one occasion! Nevertheless, it was lots of fun!

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