



Building BRIDGEs

Late last month as a part of the BRIDGE Asia/Pacific Schools Partnership Programme, I was given the opportunity to visit the small island of Nauru and spend a week working with both the staff and students at Nauru College.

BRIDGE is a program backed by the Australian Government that aims to build international dialogue and relationships between schools, staff and students. An element of this is a staff exchange and homestay between schools partnered in the programme. Earlier in the year Scotch College hosted Principal Sharina Deiye from Nauru College for one week.

Nauru is a very small island in a very large ocean, only a few square kilometres larger than Rottneest. The population is just short 11, 000 and due to a history of mining the natural resources are scarce. Being lucky enough to visit such a unique and isolated part of the world was an exciting opportunity. Working with a Middle School with a similar structure presented many opportunities to explore teaching and learning strategies.

Nauru College is situated on the coast and operates a four stream Middle School, with staff comprising of Fijian and Nauruan backgrounds. Working primarily with Year 6 students and helping to explore new ideas for PE and classroom lessons provided an opportunity to test my own experience and learn from others. Engaging with the students highlighted their enthusiasm for schooling, sports and questioning. Students were particularly happy with the donations and messages passed on by the West Coast Eagles. Year 6 students received new house shirts as a result of these generous donations.

During my visit I was lucky enough to be included in the Angam Day celebrations. This is a day that remembers and celebrates the repopulation of Nauru on two historical occasions, once after measles almost wiped out the people of the island after World War I and then again after the Japanese occupation of World War II. The positivity of the people through the songs, sports and community activities was a highlight.

A chance to be immersed in a new culture and countries practices was unique and very special. Students from Nauru College produced letters to share with my class explaining the importance of this national holiday and the influence of their culture on day to day living. This experience was full of challenges, but even more rewards and I look forward to sharing these experiences with staff and students of the college.

Mr Justin Shaw
Year 6 Co-ordinator