RESIDENTIAL REPORT

EDITION #2   *SEMESTER 2 2015*

SYDNEY WARS: RETURN OF AURORA

PARTY BUS VIP SECTION: BEHIND THE SCENES

This exclusive image was captured behind the scenes of the VIP section on the party bus! Looks like Aurora's teachers are secretly party animals – the ones who weren't texting anyway!
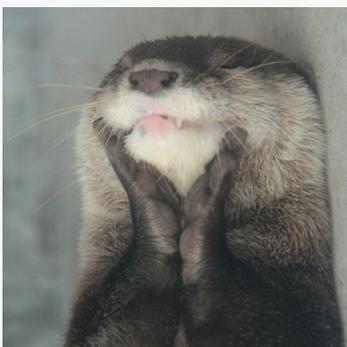

NEW NAME TAGS: PROS AND CONS

Students were given new name tags this residential, with a new design, portrait rather than landscape, and new functionality, with a fabric collar replacing the old safety pin and clip.

The tags have been a major functional improvement. They have proven much less breakable and more difficult to misplace thanks to the new collar design, with the vast majority of students

Despite this improvement however, some students disliked the new name tags, saying they "felt like pets" while wearing them.

Overall though, the feeling seems to be the name tags were an improvement and should be kept for next residential.

Aurora returned to Sydney on Tuesday for another series of exciting adventures. (They still didn't quite match up to last semester's res, but to be honest, what *could* match that? The only way to top a museum *and* an observatory would be to visit somewhere in Sydney with lots of animals, including otters... hint hint☺)

The first stop was ANSTO, also known as the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, Australia's only nuclear reactor. Students learned about the many tasks carried out at ANSTO and about the difference between research and power reactors – but more importantly they got to freak their parents out by saying they had lunch at a nuclear reactor.

After that, students moved on to the University of Technology in Sydney for an event called "We Speak Code", where they used Microsoft's Touch Develop web app to invent all kinds of crazy geometric patterns and flappy bird clones. Following this, students were given a fast-paced tour of the university, including the "Super Lab", possibly the coolest looking Science classroom in history.

The final destination before heading home was the busy, modern Broadway shopping centre, where students bought lunch before being treated to a private screening of *Pan*, and while many felt the movie wasn't the best, the seating in the cinema was very comfortable and students and teachers got to keep the brand new 3D glasses!

PAN REVIEW ★★⯪☆☆

As Mr. Howard put it, *Pan*, directed by Joe Wright, was widely *panned* by critics – but did it deserve such a cold reception?

Well, in many ways, yes. It suffered from the same 'prequelitis' that plagued the *Star Wars* prequels, it tried to add to a story that was already complete and ended up taking rather than adding. Much-loved characters became one-dimensional shadows of themselves and the story was about as clichéd as a story can get.

However, the movie wasn't all bad. One thing *Pan* did well was the visuals. Granted, plenty of movies like *How to Train Your Dragon* and *Interstellar* had better visuals *and* a better story – but credit where it's due – the visuals were impressive. On top of that, Levi Miller did a great job as the title character, considering what he had to work with, and Garrett Hedlund pulled off a fun, if strange, interpretation of Captain Hook.

Ultimately, the film failed to live up to the original – *and* failed to live up to the high-quality movies released over the past two years – but it's not all bad. It's just... average.

PEACE, LOVE AND COOKIES

Readers of the last Residential Report will recall the divisive war between otters and dolphins that nearly tore Aurora College apart. Well, the war is no more!

Following negotiations on the forums in semester one, the otter and dolphin sides signed a peace treaty, declaring both sides would call off all attacks and threats towards each other and not attack or threaten each other in the future. Furthermore, the otters stated they would bring free cookies to residential in semester two – and they didn't go back on their promise!

A total of 92 chocolate chip cookies were offered to students during the Thursday assembly, over half of which were claimed by students. With the pleasant aftertaste of peace still in Aurorans' mouths, it seems like the era of peace will not be ending any time soon.

PHOTO GALLERY: NOTHING TRIVIAL ABOUT TRIVIA NIGHT

A panorama shot showing the immense scale of trivia fun!

FALSE ALARM: AURORA STUDENTS EVACUATED TWICE

Aurora students were rudely awoken twice by fire alarms before their big day out on Tuesday.

The first alarm rang during supper, students carrying nothing but waffles and phones to pass the time – while the second rang at midnight, ensuring students were cold and tired ready for the next day.

The cutest poster ever made

A team doing trivia stuff

The answer was 'plane' to see

OPINION PIECE:
PRESERVING HISTORY – HOW, WHAT AND WHY

Xsel – it's just one word, but it evokes so many feelings. For Year 10 students, nostalgia and pride; for teachers, nervousness and a desire to talk about literally anything else – and for everyone else, confusion – "what is this Xsel thing?" Such a sensitive issue needs to be handled carefully – but it also cannot be ignored.

So let's start with the "why". Why talk about Xsel? Why does it matter? Well it matters because it's history, because one day someone will look back and ask "where did the idea for the first virtual school come from?" and the only answer they'll get is "the magic idea fairies". We can't obscure history like this. As Aurorans, as academics and as Australians, it is our duty to preserve and share our history.

So what then? What do we say? Well, why not just say what actually happened?

Xsel was a program started by Barbara Bannister and Pauline Freeburn, teachers in western NSW who wanted to give gifted students a fair go in a region with no physical selective high schools. It had individual work and assignments via Moodle, communication via Email, residential schools each term and classes through Adobe Connect. It was a virtual school in every way, except for the fact it wasn't called a "school".

Eventually, the minister for education noticed the success of the program and decided to make it into an official state-wide school, renaming it "Aurora College". This is the true, full story of how the virtual high school was born.

It was not randomly dreamed up one afternoon. Rather, it was designed to solve a problem in a local region – and it was later discovered the same formula could become something much bigger.

So – how do we say it? How do we get people to know that Aurora was based on a previous program without harming the brand image as the incredible, innovative "*first* virtual high school"? Well, there are many ways to do so.

One option is to use the local history to our advantage – to say that Aurora began as Xsel, a local project set up by everyday people, and the fact it became so huge shows that anyone *can* make a difference. Another is to publish some kind of history of Aurora – a pamphlet showing what Aurora is, why it's worth being a part of and of course its origins.

Possibly the best option, however, is to do what Mr. Robertson did on Thursday's assembly. He didn't make a big song and dance – but he didn't hide Xsel either. He didn't discredit Xsel as "not a real school", nor did he over-glorify it. He simply commented on the sense of community and the wonderful ideas it fostered. If we do that more often – simply openly talk about our history – people will come to understand it, without harming to anyone.
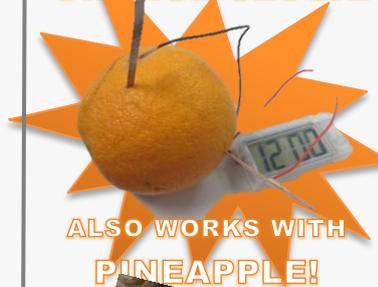
EVACUATION WAFFLES

(A poem by the reporter)

Evacuation waffles
Sugar dose at night
Evacuation waffles
Assisting in our flight

We leave the hall behind
Our drinks, our games, our quarrels
But the one thing we bring with us
Our evacuation waffles

MEET THE ALL-NEW ORANGE CLOCK!

ALSO WORKS WITH PINEAPPLE!

SOFT TOYS RETURN TO RESIDENTIAL

Leshi the Otter returned after last residential – this time with groupies!

Meet Skipper the Otter, official mascot of Trivia Night, and Kemuri the Quilava, the first pokemon to visit a residential school.