Dear Parents and Students,

I am writing to let you know about a service opportunity in the Northern Territory for Year 9 students, that I would like to recommend to you.

Earlier this year, a group of TAS boys, some fathers and staff made the journey to the magical Red Centre for a week’s holiday program at Yipirinya School, an independent school for disadvantaged Aboriginal students at Alice Springs. Yipirinya is a unique school where the teaching of four Central Australian languages is part of the curriculum. Yipirinya’s Principal is former TAS Headmaster Ken Langford-Smith, and another staff member is James Howey, former TAS Counsellor Brother James.

While in 2014 our group helped run a school holiday activities program, in 2015 we will be visiting Yipirinya during their term time, forging special friendships in and out of the classroom with students, helping with a maintenance project, as well as having the opportunity to take in some of the sites of Alice Springs including Desert Park, the Alice Springs Telegraph Station Historic Reserve, and the Araluen Cultural Centre.

The trip concludes with a magnificent cultural expedition to Kings Canyon, Uluru and Kuta Tjuta, including a sacred Aboriginal site not open to the public.

The trip will be lead by myself and a second staff member. If there are vacancies, the trip may be opened to parents.

An information session will be held early in Term 1, 2015 and we would appreciate you taking the time to discuss with your son this wonderful opportunity over the school holidays.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me to express your interest, or for more information, on thughes@as.edu.au or 0409 662 420.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Hughes

DATES: 12-20 April, 2015 (the last week of the NSW school holidays and the first week of Term 2 at Yipirinya).

COST: Approximately $1800 including airfares (Arm/Syd/Alice Springs, return Uluru/Sydney/Armidale); accommodation and three night cultural expedition.

Here’s what some of this year’s participants said:

“I had been a bit hesitant to go, but it was the best thing I’ve ever done in my life. To see those conditions here in Australia was confronting, but it was a really great experience.”

Ben Moffatt (Year 10)

“We came back knowing that material possessions don’t buy happiness, and how fortunate we are.”

(Liam Treavors, Year 9)

“The opportunity to participate in a service trip within Australia with my son was a wonderful experience. Although somewhat confronting at times, the Yipirinya experience enabled us to develop a greater understanding of and respect for Indigenous culture. Developing friendships with some of the children was a real highlight. After spending just over a week at the school, both Ben and I are more appreciative of just how fortunate we are. I thoroughly recommend this trip.”

(Mr Tim Moffatt, parent)