

Celebrating cultural diversity in the St Margaret's boarding house

In the second week of this term, the Boarding House held its second annual 'See my difference, See my worth' festival to celebrate the boarding community's vibrant cultural diversity.

The two-day event featured a program of rich experiences celebrating the uniqueness of every one of our 170 boarders who hail from a broad range of geographical and cultural backgrounds.

Food is, of course, a cultural expression and at the festival it was a delicious way for the students to journey around the world without leaving the dinner table. Throughout the weekend, various cooking classes were held where students made everything from strawberry protein balls to 'sop sop'. A traditional dish from Thursday Island, the 'sop sop' recipe the girls created was passed down from the grandmother of Year 12 boarder Jo Loban.

On the Saturday evening, St Margaret's Head Chef Scott Johnson and his team created a cultural feast where students could discover new cuisines and experience new tastes, sharing traditional dishes from the many cultures that make up the boarding house community.

Head of Boarding Ms Lesa Fowler said the festival focused on acknowledging that we are all different and each girl brings their own individual characteristics to the boarding community.

"Accepting each other and appreciating different views, cultures and values formed the basis of our activities during the festival weekend," said Ms Fowler.

Dance is another avenue for cultural expression and an opportunity to learn about other cultures. During the festival the girls learnt many different dances and enjoyed a traditional Papua New Guinean dance performance by Boarder Captain Chrisea Dawanincura and her family. Co-boarder captain Pru Brosnan followed with a traditional Acknowledgement of Country.

Other festival activities included a Tai Chi session run by Serina He (Year 12) and a Pacific Islands flower crown making session which gave the girls an understanding of Islander culture.

The international students ran a chopsticks challenge and our rural girls held a very Australian whip cracking demonstration.

Ms Fowler said the success of the weekend was due to many in our St Margaret's community.

"The festival would not have been possible without the wonderful inspiration and organisation by Housemothers Janet and Grace, the kitchen staff for planning and preparing an International feast and the facilities team for their assistance in setting up this wonderful event.

"The Year 12s also played an integral part in the success of the weekend, demonstrating outstanding leadership skills," said Ms Fowler.