



## Poverty Immersion

Immersion programs are unique learning experiences that encourage active citizenship via an experiential learning model. The learning is so profound that it aids students in understanding what it means to be part of the human community mindful of the journey of others, especially the most vulnerable.

Experiential Learning is the educational principle that underpins the Poverty Immersion as it acknowledges learning activities that are just as much about doing as they are about thinking. Face-to-face encounters that build relationships can greatly assist participants' comprehension of matters such as human dignity, truth, community and justice.

Social Justice and human rights are among the most important of all human and spiritual values. The Year 11 Poverty Immersion conducted by the College seeks to promote action and thought that might generate better outcomes for our society, for our College communities, and for the least fortunate in our neighbourhoods. The experience of students who participated in the Poverty Immersion, suggests that immersion participation can be one of the most enriching experiences of a young person's life.

The College's location in the CBD is an ideal place to run an immersion experience. Its Reconciliation and Christian Service Learning policies encourage members of the College community to befriend our neighbours and take opportunities to glimpse and better understand the needs of our brothers and sisters who are marginalised. It is also well known that the College and Cathedral grounds have in the past sheltered the homeless.

The Poverty Immersion has now been developed into a Curriculum Council Endorsed Unit and is planned with the key elements of: mindful preparation, reflective practice during the service experience and reflection that leads to action after the experience. Students are also given tasks during the year to complete and organise projects for specific organisations visited or to raise awareness to the poverty that surrounds us.

The Poverty Immersion is supported by inspirational mentors. It requires students to bring a willingness to grow and to connect with people who live quite different lives than them. Students are expected to be respectful, have a willingness to build relationships with host communities and people they might meet. They are expected to participate in all activities, do their share of domestic work in regard to shared meals and any other collective tasks.

Participants are selected from a diverse and rich pool of applicants who are open to gain from the experience.

Some of the experiences the students participate in include:

- The Red Cross Soup Run
- Volunteering at the Salvation Army Genesis Homeless Shelter
- Assisting at St Bart's Shelter in East Perth
- Visiting drop in centres around Perth CBD
- Sitting in on sessions at the Perth Courts
- Assisting childcare workers at Gurlongga Njinnj
- Preparing food for the visitors at Shopfront
- Presentations by guest speakers

Participants' sense of personal and civic responsibility is enhanced with many students developing relationships with agencies visited, and volunteering on a regular basis.