



Vietnam Day 3, 14 August 2016

As announced earlier in the year, former student, Sarah Pilgrim was the Tasmanian winner of the 2016 Simpson Prize Competition. This announcement was coupled with the news of Sophia Belleair's meritorious accomplishment in the same competition. Sophia was the runner-up for Tasmania and she, along with Sarah, won an educational tour to Canberra in March. Winning both of the major awards for Tasmania was a real coup and source of pride for Rose Bay High School.



As part of her prize, Sarah travelled to Vietnam. Below is Sarah's blog of her experiences during day 3 of the Simpson Prize recipients' overseas travels.

On Sunday 14 August we left the bustle of Ho Chi Minh City and travelled through the tranquil countryside to embark a boat on the Mekong Delta, which is an expansive network of rivers and islands in southern Vietnam. It is divided into nine tributaries, known as Cuu Long (the 'Nine Dragons'), and is a smaller part of the Mekong River, which runs through six countries; China, Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam. The Mekong Delta is home to approximately 17 million people and there is one boat in almost every household, as it is the primary means of transportation. There are many things to be seen on the Mekong Delta, such as floating markets, small rivers and mangroves, and stores lining the waterfront.



Our first stop of the day was at a workshop on the side of the river where they produce coconut candy, rice paper, and popped rice. We watched and learned how all of the products were made and the chance to try all of these Vietnamese delicacies. We then took a scenic boat ride in a traditional Vietnamese row boat, through winding tributaries that flowed past the homes of the local people. Beautiful greenery lined the small rivers and the sun gently shined down on us in our nón lá, the traditional Vietnamese conical hat, as we made our way through the Mekong Delta.



We returned to shore and disembarked in Vinh Long. After settling in to our hotel, we ventured out again to try our unrivalled favourite Vietnamese specialty; Vietnamese iced coffee, in which condensed milk and coffee are combined before being poured over ice and water.

After our stop at the café, we continued on to a shopping centre where we experienced shopping like a local. We finished the day with a fantastic dinner by the riverside. It was a day full of laughter and experiences and the highlight is without a doubt the immersion and insight we receive into the rich Vietnamese culture. From interacting with the people of Vietnam to sampling local foods, this trip has proven to be a once in a lifetime experience.

Sarah Pilgrim

Rose Bay High School, Tasmania

Photos and blog entry courtesy of:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2016/08/12/simpson-prize-2016>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/blog/2016/08/20/simpson-prize-vietnam-day-3-14-august-2016/>

We urge our future grade nine and ten student to capitalise on their skills and extend themselves by responding to the challenges to be presented by the 2017/18 Simpson Prize.

Likewise, we would strongly encourage current eight students to seize the opportunity and enter the Frank MacDonald MM Memorial Prize next year.

Suzanne Pattinson

