Science opportunity at Knox

Knox Grammar School is a leading Australian day and boarding school for boys, located in Sydney. Knox, a Uniting Church school for boys from Kindergarten to Year 12, aims to develop, within a caring environment, young men of integrity, wisdom, compassion and faith.

The summer holidays are not always about relaxing and taking time out. For two Year 12 boarders at Knox Grammar, Ben So and Paul Chatton, the most recent summer holiday was about exploring new areas in science, challenging themselves to think beyond the classroom and mixing with like-minded young scientists from around Australia.

Ben attended the prestigious National Youth Science Forum (NYSF) held in the summer school holidays at the University of Western Australia. It is a twelve-day residential program for Australia’s best and brightest science students; selection is very competitive involving numerous interviews with members of Rotary International who sponsor students to attend.

One of the most important elements of the NYSF is the program of visits to research and industry facilities. Established by CSIRO, ANU and Rotary, this program exposes students to a range of leaders in various fields, ranging from physics, mathematics and computing, chemistry, biomedicine, animal and plant biology, earth and environmental sciences, and engineering. Students have a unique opportunity to talk with dozens of practicing scientists about their work.

Ben was hoping that attending NYSF would help him clarify his ideas about university and degree choices but now with a much broader view of the possibilities he has widened the scope and is considering interstate universities and their benefits.

Paul attended the Honeywell Engineering Summer School (HESS) in Sydney, which is an initiative supported by Honeywell, Engineers Australia Sydney Division and Rotary clubs around NSW and ACT.

Students gain the opportunity of experiencing day-to-day life as an engineer through access to universities and contact with Australia’s leading engineering organisations. Opportunities exist to talk with and observe engineers employed in government, private and research facilities covering a broad range of discipline categories such as biomedical, chemical, civil, environmental, electrical, computer or mechanical engineering.

Paul says HESS was a great experience that has given him a deeper insight into the different fields of engineering and the course offerings of different universities, and that it will allow him to confidently decide course preferences and universities. Highlights of the program included the various competitions such as bridge building and egg drops, and the amazing materials, such as a shape memory alloy, that he got to experiment with, and the demonstration of an earthquake shaking table.