

Georgina Amott – Stewart's placement report
Remote Aboriginal Community Placement
Shepherdson College – Elcho Island NT
6/11/17 – 24/11/17

My name is Georgie, I'm studying a Masters of Early Years and Primary Teaching at Monash University at the Clayton campus in Melbourne. I have just completed my first of the two-year course and am thoroughly enjoying it. I was fortunate to be able to do a remote Aboriginal placement at Shepherdson College on Elcho Island in the Northern Territory. I completed this placement in the lower primary setting. I am so grateful to have been supported by the NAFEA and rewarded with a Scholarship.

I spent my 3 weeks with grade 2/3 students in the William 1 classroom. I learnt a lot about Yolngu language and culture at Shepherdson Collage as they teach in the North-East Arnhem Land language Yolngu Matha and in English. The Yolngu people value their culture very highly in the Galiwinku community. Each classroom has a Yolngu teacher as well as a Balandar (non- Aboriginal) teacher. In some communities, the Aboriginal teacher is the main classroom teacher and the Balandar is a support. In Elcho, they are still working towards this with the Balandar as the main classroom teacher currently.

I saw and learnt a lot on Elcho island in terms of culture and educational challenges. This experience has helped me to begin to understand as well as given me a wonderful insight and respect for Aboriginal cultures. I use the word 'begin' as I only scrapped the surface. There are many Aboriginal cultures throughout Australia and this experience has helped me to begin to understand and respect individually the Aboriginal and Torres Strait values, culture and challenges. Like each community, each family and child is individual in their experiences, abilities and challenges. I have also been fortunate to have a fantastic mentor who guided, supported and enabled me to learn strategies for teaching Aboriginal learners. It was a wonderful, valuable and rewarding experience that I will never forget. I hope to see my new friends again one day. I recommend if you get the opportunity to do a placement in community to take it with both hands and be open minded.

Thank you again to the NAFEA for your support.