

'Door-of-Hope' Youth Team (Tasmania) to Northern Aboriginal Christian Convention

From an Interview with Pete Freeman

*Team with
Lyle Morris &
Herbie Harold
(Nion)*



It's stinkin' hot, it's remote, and it's outback

Australia in all God's glory. Enter a bunch of in-your-face, full throttle, live life loud, "we're in a spiritual war" Door of Hope youth; Pete Freeman, Sam Thiele, Amy Symington, Andrew Stocks, Jade Van Stralen, Carmel McGee, Kristen Spilsbury & Jacqui Kerrison.

My pen flies across the page in a desperate attempt to keep up with the passionate barrage coming from Pete Freeman's lips. In the end, I just give up and listen... listen to a man who, even though his faith is new, knows what he wants and where he is going. "I need to work on God's work—where He sends", he says. Pete wears his heart on his sleeve as he begins to chat with me about the team's September visit to the isolated town of Normanton, just south of the Gulf of Carpentaria in Queensland. With a population of just 1100, 66% of whom are indigenous Australians, it's not surprising that Normanton was chosen as the location for the Christian Aboriginal Convention. Around 200 people attended the convention at the cattle station "Delta Downs". It consisted of testimonies, speaking the word, bible reading and in the evening, country music and worship. It was here that the team was responsible for leading the convention's children's program whilst living within a different culture.

Pete, whose work at Brookes High School brings him into contact with indigenous children daily says, "I needed to get in and do everything I could. I wanted to use my experiences and my new knowledge of the Aboriginal culture in my job".

The team rose early, after sleeping in tents. Following morning devotions, breakfast was cooked on an open fire. The team then led the children in games, singing and talking about God. Things became pretty laid back between ten a.m and three p.m. Pete tells me that the extreme heat, reaching between 45-50 degrees celsius was a big challenge for the Tassie team. No surprise, the river was a



popular place to spend time playing and bonding with the kids. "The kids were very responsive", comments Pete. He recalls a heart plunge moment... "I was sitting in my hammock reading my bible and some kids came up to talk to me. I started flicking through the New Testament and if I found something that was appropriate, I read it out to them". Pete tells me emphatically that the Gospel is about love, not culture. He says, "You don't need to strip people of their culture to give them the gospel. It's not white religion!"

Normanton-home of an 8.64 metre statue of a salt water crocodile, the largest ever shot.



*It is home to the traditional
owners of our beautiful land
and now, feels like home to a
group of in-your face, full
throttle, live life loud,
"we're in a spiritual war"
Door of Hope youth!*

