



Above & right: Padre David Shrimpton with Andrew McDonough. Photo by Katherine Waite & David Shrimpton

The Three Wise Camel Tour

Words Katherine Waite



The Broken Hill Flying Padre David Shrimpton hosted children's author and illustrator Andrew McDonough for a far west tour they named 'Three wise camels tour' in early November 2024.

Flying around in the Padre's plane, the pair visited six schools over seven days, as well attending two church services and a Special Religious Education (SRE) workshop in Broken Hill.

They visited the remote towns of Tibooburra, Wanaaring, Louth, Pooncarie and Clare, as well as the School of the Air in Broken Hill.

At each school, Andrew shared his Three Wise Camels story, a humorous take on the Christmas story where the focus is on the three camels who carried the three wise men.

At each school, he ran a drawing workshop where the kids' created sheep, flies, camels and spiders. The most popular drawing was of a sheep riding a motorbike eating pizza.

However, according to Padre David, the highlight of each tour was building a life size camel which the kids paraded around the

school to meet the chooks, eat cauliflower in the garden and have a sleep on the schoolroom floor.

Padre David said the response from the teachers and students was positive and that at some places they were asked to stay for the entire school day to meet parents at school pick up and engage with the community.

"Each student received some artwork and stickers and were also able to choose a copy of one of Andrew's Lost Sheep books, which Andrew then signed and included a personal message of encouragement," Padre David said.

"Our best quote of the day came from a Year 6 student who enthusiastically announced, 'I don't like drawing, but this has been fun. I can't believe I can do it,'" Padre David said.

Whilst in Broken Hill, Andrew ran a storytelling workshop for local SRE teachers in town and visited two church services.

However, Andrew was quick to add that country people are brilliant storytellers.

"So the main thing about storytelling is just knowing you can do it. It's then just going okay,

how long do I go for? So it's not just a meandering anecdote. So just a bit of thought before - why am I telling this? How do I want to do it? How long have I got?

"If you're doing formal storytelling - a bit of a practise beforehand always helps and just trust yourself and do it because you're a lot more interesting than you realise," he said.

Andrew said he's a country boy at heart, and he has a unique connection to Broken Hill. His great grandfather was a photographer in the early 1900s in Broken Hill and his Great Uncle was Mayor in the 1920s.

He said his grandfather was Charles W Rawlings who was the artist employed by the mines in the 1920s who pioneered industrial etching.

"I've got all these pictures that he did a hundred years ago, etchings of the mines, and you come and see and it still looks the same," he said.

Andrew said he'd love to exhibit the drawings at the local art gallery and hopes to come back to Broken Hill soon.

Andrew's trip to the far west was sponsored by a grant from the Uniting Church NSW / ACT Synod.



Above: Students' drawings and Andrew McDonough draws for children
Below clockwise: Andrew with the big camel, drawing a sheep on a motorbike and a workshop session with SRE teachers in Broken Hill.

