

Prehistoric past is school's present

NIGEL AUSTIN
IGA WARTA COMMUNITY

LEIGH Creek Area School has emerged as the best place in the world to study the Ediacaran period – and Governor-General Michael Jeffery couldn't be more impressed.

On a visit to the school on his Year of the Outback 2006 Back to the Bush trip through the South Australian Outback yesterday, Maj-Gen Jeffery said the school's approach to education was inspiring.

Under its new Ediacaran-inspired curriculum, the school has embraced the learning opportunities that have arisen.

School headmaster Brian Yuill said he welcomed the visit so he could show Maj-Gen Jeffery the new learning opportunities which included students mixing it with palaeontologists from around the world.

Mr Yuill said the discovery of fossilised soft body creatures and the change of the fossil timeline to include the Ediacaran period – 540-635 million years ago – presented a range of valuable opportunities to the school.



IN THE PINK: Maj-Gen Michael Jeffery, left, and Keith Rasheed in the Land-Rover yesterday. **Picture:** MARK BRAKE

On the Back to the Bush journey yesterday, Maj-Gen Jeffery began at Wilpena Pound and moved through the Brachina Gorge in the Flinders Ranges to the Prairie Hotel, Beltana Township, Leigh Creek, Nepabunna and Iga Warta Aboriginal communities in the Flinders Ranges.

At Wilpena, he was taken on a tour by Keith Rasheed in his 1972 short-wheel-base

pink Land-Rover. Mr Rasheed said he used the car for special occasions such as yesterday's visit by the Governor-General.

"I just thought the pink Land-Rover was something you had to have," he said.

Mr Yuill said other new teaching opportunities included hands-on learning for the school's 160 students in areas such as science,

arts, tourism and Aboriginal

culture. Students were also making duplicates of some of the fossils and selling them to tourists in the school-community operated Leigh Creek Regional Visitor Centre. "Students help run the centre, providing information to 8000 tourists a year," Mr Yuill said.

"The fossil duplicates are being sold alongside some of the school's other enter-

prises including everything from art and craft to wattleseed muffins.

"It's about the school and the curriculum and teaching the children."

On day two of The Back to the Bush trip, Maj-Gen Jeffery outlined his involvement in a national mentoring scheme where grandparents are mentors for struggling students.

Party cheer for workers

BREAK out the Bollinger. The end of year bash for workers around Australia could have just become better.

Workplaces will be able to claim more expenses incurred by staff from the tax man.

Measures introduced in this week's billion-dollar Budget means the amount of money spent on minor gifts for staff has tripled. The level was set at \$100 and had to be infrequent. That now rises to \$300. Deloitte partner Karen Stein said the move meant workers could be in for a treat. The most obvious and allowable, is the Christmas party.

Asylum law creates fear

CONTROVERSIAL new migration laws threatening to divide the Federal Government began an expected rough passage through Parliament yesterday.

Under the changes, all asylum seekers landing on the mainland will be sent to offshore detention centres in Nauru or Papua New Guinea's Manus Island.

Refugee advocates fear the changes could see women and children locked in detention.

Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone said the government would not allow border protection to be undermined.

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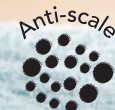
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