

## Chaplain breaks new ground in mining towns

FROM running breakfast programs, to hunting goanna, Goldfields YouthCARE chaplain Martine May has enjoyed an eventful start in the region.

Ms May has just completed her first term as itinerant YouthCARE chaplain at Coolgardie Primary, Menzies RCS, Leonora DHS and Laverton DHS - all of which have never had a YouthCARE chaplain before.

“It has been an exciting journey so far, building relationships with staff, students and local communities,” she said.

Ms May said she had been warmly welcomed as she supported the schools with their Breakfast Clubs, outdoor learning programs and grief counselling.

“I love being able to support and encourage and sometimes bring a sense of hope to some,” she said.

A particular highlight was participating in NAIDOC week celebrations in Leonora.

“We had cooking classes in ‘Indigenous foods from Torres Strait’ which were given by an amazing lady who works for Juvenile Justice in Kalgoorlie,” Ms May said.

“The students learned to cook the food together and at the end of the school day, were able to sit down on the oval together to eat this amazing food they had created.

The activities continued with a camping adventure in the bush.

“We collected piles of dead scrub to keep to our fires well lit and the elders came to teach the students how to cook traditional food,” Ms may said.

“We cooked damper and potatoes in the coals and in our particular camp, we cooked kangaroo, crocodile and buffalo sausages – all sourced by our teacher.

“It was wonderful to walk around to each camp, introducing myself to the parents and families of students and sampling some of their cuisine.”

The students took some of the students to find some highly-prized witchetty grubs, before a female elder took the ‘mob’ out to hunt for goanna.

Using a stick, the elder started to search for the animal.

“She told us she could feel where it was and before long she told one of the teachers to start digging,” Ms May said.

“He dug down deeply into the dirt, then suddenly another lady dove down and yanked out an enormous Goanna.

“We all walked with her back to the camp whereby the prize of the day was prepared and placed on to the hot coals to cook.

“The whole school and community had a fantastic day and it was later said it was the best camp they had ever had.”

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### KEY INFORMATION

- There are over 350 chaplains in about 600 schools