Controversial Time In Australian History In Rabbit Proof Fence

“To get through the hardest journey we need to take only one step at a time, but we must keep stepping” (A quote from the movie)

Good morning pastoral team, my name is Jayden Elder and I’m here to further express why our cohort within this college must watch the biopic Rabbit Proof Fence.

A ‘journey’ is commonly defined as a movement from one place to another but there is more to it. Everyone will face a journey at some point within their lifetime weather your young or old. These journeys can be physical, inner or imaginative and can lead to moral growth and self-discovery. The concept ‘journey’ can be explored through the film Rabbit Proof Fence. Students certainly go through a significant journey from adolescence to adulthood, so this film is vital for them to watch

The journey through the film Rabbit Proof Fence, Molly, her sister Daisy and cousin Gracie were both physically and emotionally painful as the girls escape from captivity in Moore River to travel 1500 miles back home to Jigalong through the harsh Western Australian outback in which is astonishing. To narrow it down to kilometres, the girls travelled a total of 2,414km back home which I think is extraordinary.

By watching this film, it was demonstrated that sometimes in life we may face journeys without a choice in which could also be a process that leads to a greater understanding about your strength and weakness through challenges and obstacles encountered. In this speech, I will be discussing my personal understanding of the concept journey through the film “Rabbit Proof Fence”.

Rabbit-Proof Fence was made in 2002 Australian film which is based on the book, Rabbit-Proof Fence by Doris Pilkington Grimard. It is loosely based on a true story about the author’s mother, Molly, who was a part of the Stolen Generations. The film ‘Rabbit-Proof Fence’ tells an important story about a controversial time in Australian history in which I believe the students of year 11 must watch.

The movie trails Molly, Daisy and Gracie from childhood to adulthood. Unfortunately, at very young age, the girls were taken from their family from their hometown in East Pilbara and transported to Moore River, north of Perth, for the result of them being half castes , they were more or less likely forcibly removed and granted education, food, shelter and showering facilities. The structure in which they were bought up to live tore away their identity as it not only made them forget who they are but also their ancient language in which has been carried for thousands of years.

However, being the resilient people, they are! The three little girls under the age of 14, managed to escape and begin a journey of 1500km home through the dry western outback to return to their point of origin, back to their providers, their family and loved ones!

You may consider this film has no relation to any of use however, the power of its story line is the reason being why I stand in front of you today. It still resonates today as I personally believe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander's are still being degraded and left feeling worthless, yet this movie was created 17 years ago and still only a minor percentage of what happened back than has stopped yet the ongoing treatment still stands.

Within the film there were countless film techniques in which were used to emotively express the film. A scene within the movie that resonated with me was when the three girls got taken from their families in their home town of Jigalong. If you haven't seen this scene, this is it!

Play the scene within the PowerPoint! https://aso.gov.au/titles/features/rabbit-proof-fence/clip1/

After watching this scene, if you don't feel gut wrenched and disappointed in the acts that were displayed during that time, then I'm afraid to say that this was the world that you are living in.

By far, I believe this scene is the most controversial as it shows three innocent girls being snatched from their families for being half castes.

How would you feel if your children were taken away from you and sent 1500 miles away?

You would feel destroyed both emotionally and physically, knowing that you may never see the innocent faces of your children again.

The fury, the pain and distress were written in black and white all over their parents faces however the man took no care and still took the innocent children away. What made this scene resonate with me was the tone of voice from their parents as they yelled, screamed and cry for their kids yet they were still taken from them.

Whilst watching the film, there are numerous takeaway values that I think we as a cohort we can learn from. Firstly, I believe this film hold a strong message of reconciliation. After watching the film, it made me realise the power of reconciliation. 'Reconciliation is about strengthening relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous peoples, for the benefit of all Australians.' Although there may have been traumatic experiences and scenes throughout the movie, we still need to remember that it is important to reconcile and make amends despite the struggles we may be confronted with.

Secondly, the journey of the movie I believe shows an important value in which is resilient/Grit. For those who don't know what resilience is, it is "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness. The film expresses how resilient these girls were, especially Molly being the eldest. She had the courage and resilience to walk alongside her sister and her cousin 1500 miles through a rough, dry Australian outback. However, their cousin Gracie unfortunately didn't make it home as she was taken back to Moore River. Even though they were miserable and disheartened with the loss of there cousin, they still had a journey to get back home to their family and their loved ones. Personally, I believe this relates to us as Year 11's as we may possibly go into leadership roles next year and may need to be resilient with ourselves on our journey towards the end of our schooling years.

Finally, the last value in which caught my attention whilst watching the film was gratitude. This film taught me a lesson or two about being grateful for people in my life including friends and

family. It made me appreciate my family and friends because you never know how long you have left or nor do you know what the future holds. In saying this, I personally believe we must appreciate and be grateful for everything in our life because there are people out there facing difficulties and doing it tough.

All and all. This film must be shown to Year 11 students because of its rich connection to Australian history. The film itself stirred up a lot of controversy in Australia due to its portrayal of the Stolen Generations. To the Year 12's of 2020, and use who stand before me, Rabbit-Proof Fence is an authentic film that avoids sentimentality and lets the courage and natural wisdom of the girls shine through. Hopefully, after my presentation to you today, this film will become a vehicle for reconciliation, Resilience, Self-Acceptance to the Year 11s in which are guaranteed to take away a message or two from.