

From Snowy Peaks to new heights, TS Orion continues to grow bigger and bolder each year!

TS ORION 2024 Year in Review by CDTLS William Almond

Kicking off the year, January brought a whole new cohort of cadets, ready to immerse themselves in the cadet spirit! In just one month TS Orion transformed from 15 cadets to a whopping powerhouse of 27!

Along with growing numbers, TS Orion as well as the ANC, has been starstruck by a whole new host of electives: Powerboating, Sailing, First Aid, Public Affairs, Robotics, Bridge Operations, Drumming, Ceremonial Weapons, Engineering, Operations and Support, these electives play a pivotal role in the ANCs brand new training program: the CYDC (Cadet Youth Development Continuum).

CDTCPO Hunter Clark comments on how the CYDC electives have changed cadets, so that there's a spot for everyone.

“The new electives make cadets so much fun in the way that you can choose what to learn and all the different cool stuff, so if you like photography you can do public affairs or if you love music you can do drumming, it's just really versatile and there's a place for everyone” CDTCPD Hunter Clark said.

In March, a handful of TS Orion cadets, along with other units in Waratah Flotilla, travelled to Sydney to participate in a Cadet Aviation Experience at Richmond RAAF base. An incredible opportunity for all those who were fortunate to attend.



Fast-forward to April and TS Orion had finally finished basic training for the new cadets and had started to calm down. For the recruits: knot tying, piping, basic drill and living in communal harmony was all learnt and mastered over this period.



CDTAB Matilda Almond remarks on how training the new cadets helped her deepen her learning as well.

“It was really fun getting experience in teaching and even learning more myself with the new cadets. And it was really cool once they finished because it then meant they got to do everything with everyone else”, CDTAB Matilda Almond said.

Many cadets participated in their first ANZAC Day Service, community members and parents swelled with pride to see their cadet show respect to those who have served for our country and continue to do so.



In May, cadets visited Lake Jindabyne for a morning packed full of team and puzzle games, where they then went on to visit the pool for an afternoon packed with Marco Polo, swim tests and all round aquatic games.



CDTLS Will Almond commented on how doing activities as a unit really helps bring each other together.

“It's always awesome when we get to do fun little stuff like that because it really helps solidify the unit and we all get to know each other and form friendships between both the older and younger cadets”, CDTLS Will Almond said.

During July, seventeen cadets were selected to embark on a journey to Sydney to participate in a week-long course known as an ACT (annual continuous training).

During an ACT, cadets are given the option for which course they elect to take. TS Orion cadets participated in: Drumming, General Training, Bridge Operations, Robotics and promotional courses.

The courses brought huge success for all of the cadets from TS Orion but there were some definite standouts: CDTPO Hunter Clark was promoted to CDTCPD, CDTLS Charlie VanDerHeiden was promoted to CDTPO, CDTLS William

Almond achieved his Gold in drumming and CDTLS Jakeb Gay achieved his Gold in Robotics! This meant that all of the electives and experience gained, could also be taught on a unit level.

CDTLS Jakeb Gay commented on how the ACT was for him,

“It was really awesome getting to learn all of these different electives and I'm so grateful I got the opportunity because now I can teach our whole unit drumming if need be”, says CDTLS Jakeb Gay.

Closely following up after the July ACT, September brought its own new set of events: National ACT. 150 cadets, two cadets from each unit across the country all congregate every year for the National ACT.

Often thought of as a gruelling week of challenges both physical and mental, the National ACT located on the calm waters of HMAS Cerberus truly brought the fire this year. CDTPO Charlie Van Der Heiden and CDTLS Jakeb Gay were both fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to immerse themselves in the National ACT and all the activities associated.

During Van Der Heiden's and Gay's National ACT journey they both found themselves participating in a whole range of activities you'd be hard pressed to find elsewhere. Trips to the school of survivability, activities on firefighting, where cadets were even given the opportunity to participate in putting out a real life fire, an overnight stay on MV Sycamore and who could forget the mud run.

Van Der Heiden commented on his experience during the NACT.

“It was really cool, all of the different activities, school of survivability was definitely the best for me though”, Van Der Heiden said.

Alongside the National ACT, there was also the PA course, made up of 15 cadets from across the country and lasting 9 days, tasked at learning the public affairs elective while also documenting the activities and events that transpired during the National ACT. After completing the extensive application process and making it into the course TS Orion was lucky enough to be able to send LS William Almond on the course. The course consisted of learning: photography, article writing, journalism and interviewing techniques.

‘Honestly the course was heaps of fun, it was super creative and really gave me the opportunity for my creative freedom to be shown and even all of the equipment they gave us was super cool. Everything was just amazing’, says CDTLS William Almond.



In September, TS Orion along with TS Nepean, were handed the opportunity to embark on the ship known as The James Craig, located inside Sydney Harbour. On the James Craig, cadets were instructed on how to hoist and lower the sails, tie different knots essential for life at sea, as well as all the different aspects and components of a vessel. TS Orion and TS Nepean also visited the Defence Force vehicle base, where they were given a tour on all the different types of vehicles and machinery in use within the ADF.

CDTSMN Eli Tute commented on all of the different activities they did while in Sydney.

“It was really fun going sailing for the day and then all of the vehicles were really cool too”, said Tute.



During November, TS Orion had the privilege of the Chief of Navy also known as Vice Admiral Mark Hammond visiting. During Hammonds visit, Cadets showcased a whole variety of skills: Drumming, Guard drill, Robotics, First Aid and Drones were all put on display for the Vice Admiral.

CDTAB Ella Owens commented on how she felt proud of TS Orion.

‘I felt really honoured to be able to perform the skills we learnt within our unit, especially for the CN, I felt really proud of TS Orion as a community’, Owens said.



TS Orion, came together for the Remembrance Day Service, with CDTCPD Hunter Clark delivering the Commemoration Address. The cadets once again represented themselves, the unit and the ANC exceptionally well.



December brought a whole host of new activities for the cadets. Kicking off the month CDTAB Matilda Almond and CDTAB Frances Whittington ventured on a week-long camp filled with adventurous activities: mountain biking, hiking, gym games and more. Meanwhile cadets from TS Orion, TS Canberra, TS Sirius and NTS Supply journeyed to Sydney where they boarded the South Passage sail ship looking for an insight into what life at sea is like, and what kind of things are done aboard a vessel.

Finishing strong, TS Orion also hosted their final parade that doubled as a come-and-try day where they demonstrated all of the activities and different lessons taught to cadets.



Seven cadets participated in a 2-day Start Sailing 1 course on Lake Jindabyne, gaining new skills out on the water. And wrapping up the year, cadets bid farewell to 2024 by volunteering at the Jindabyne Lions Club for the annual Senior Christmas lunch.

Newly appointed CO of TS Orion, LEUT Lee Clark commented, “2024 has been a huge year of change at TS Orion. With the introduction of the CYDC, increasing cadet enrolments by over 30%, we farewelled former CO, LEUT Keith Robinson, four new volunteer staff came onboard and had loads of amazing activities for cadets to be involved with. Being able to lead this fabulous group in Jindabyne is an absolute privilege and looking forward to 2025!”

