The Overland Track is Australia’s premier, internationally recognised multi-day walk through the World Heritage listed alpine region of Tasmania’s mid-north. Hikers from all over the world travel to Tasmania to complete the hike. The walk begins at Cradle Mountain and ends at Cynthia Bay on Lake St. Clare.

It is a walk of some 65 km over 7 days. You are away nine days in total (two days travelling either end) The length of the walk increases with numerous side-trips that branch off from the main track – climbing to the summit of Cradle Mountain and Tasmania’s highest peak, Mount Ossa, are just two. With side trips the total distance walked totals closer to 120 km. Of course, any side trips are dependent on the weather – on average rain is expected on 3 days out of any 5. In 2011, the group experienced non-stop rain for five days straight (even walking through snow flurries at times), in 2012 the group had seven days of sunshine and in 2013 the group had intermittent showers for the first two days followed by sunshine for the remainder. In 2015 the group experienced intermittent showers, sometimes very heavy and at the most inopportune times - tents and some gear ended up quite soggy after the first night.

Clearly, walkers need to be well-prepared for all conditions and to this extent, you will need to purchase both personal clothing to protect you during potential extreme weather conditions (one week before we arrived last year, a Japanese hiker died from hypothermia less than 2 hrs into the walk), as well as the food you will eat. Items such as tents, cooking stoves and packs can be supplied by the College. As a general idea, in 2013, a parent survey indicated that parents spent $600 - $800 outfitting their sons with gear.

The walk is through extremely isolated areas. You need to be fit and up to carrying a pack of some 20kg for the 7 days of hiking. All food, water and equipment must be carried, as well as your rubbish you generate. Once we start, the group must be completely self-reliant. We carry a satellite phone and an EPIRB for emergencies. From day 2 onwards, a serious injury such as a fracture will require the casualty to be medically evacuated by helicopter. We rely on each other for support and care. All walkers are required to complete a Senior First Aid Course (organised here at school).

Preparation and planning is very important, particularly if you have never done anything like this before. Beginning in Term 3, the group meets once a week, usually at lunch time, to prepare for the trip. Early in Term 4, we go on a three-day practice hike, where you have the opportunity to put the theory into practice.

With airfares and accommodation there is an additional cost to parents for the trip.

To provide an indication of cost, in 2015 this activity cost an extra $860 over and above the standard camp levy. This included the First Aid Course. Personal costs will need to be factored in as well.

Important dates:

**Monday, November 28**  Depart Sydney Airport for Tasmania and Cradle Mountain

**Tuesday, December 6**  Depart Launceston Airport for Sydney

**Wednesday, December 7**  All students at school to assist with equipment clean-up

The Tasmania hikers will not participate in the scheduled Work Experience Program

Further information can be found at:

http://www.parks.tas.gov.au/?base=7771