

REPORT ON EXCHANGE VISIT

Sydney (Knox Grammar School):

Our Experience in Australia

Our Expectations: When we applied for the exchange to Sydney, we were already looking forward not only to improving our English, but also to experiencing Australian culture. Furthermore, we were really excited about seeing the Knox Grammar School, which we attended in Australia.

The Flight: Boarding the plane, we were kind of nervous, since this was pretty much the first time we were on a plane alone. (...) Arriving in Australia, we were warmly greeted by our host families and taken to their homes. Because the trip to Australia was like one day long, we felt exhausted and fell asleep in no time (At least I did; Ruben had a harder time falling asleep).

Settling in: The first week was pretty hard, to be honest. First of all, we had to go to school the next day, which meant that we had to get up at 5:20. Then, there was a big party (year ten formal), so we had to stay up quite long. All in all, though, our host families really helped us “survive” the first week. (...)

Activities: In Australia, our host families did a great job showing us a lot of things we had never seen before. For example, we visited the Sydney Opera House, went to some crocodile parks and saw Koalas as well. Even though the weather was not that good at first, it became better during our stay. It was spring in Australia, so we enjoyed going to the beach, which was pretty close to our families’ houses.

The school: After seeing the school for the first time, we were pretty excited for sure. There are many differences between Knox Grammar School and the Gymnasium Paulinum. For example, there are many more students, so the school is extremely big. There were other differences as well. We only had six subjects, and there was lunchtime break. In contrast to our school, school in Australia always starts at 7:55 and lasts till 15:15. All in all I definitely enjoyed my time at Knox Grammar School and I can recommend it for all students applying for the exchange to Australia.

What we enjoyed most: One of the highlights for me personally was our trip to Palm Cove, where we spent five days. The sea was beautiful and we actually went snorkeling at the Great Barrier Reef, which was an indescribable experience I will never ever forget.

Home sweet home: Five weeks went by pretty quickly, and we were sad when we left Australia and especially the people we met there. But as our plane arrived in Düsseldorf, we were happy to be home. We had a great time and the host families did a great job supporting us, but after all, coming home always feels nice.

- by Vincent Coners



Vincent Coners and Ruben Schmitz