



# Mackenzie

from Ingersoll

to

Australia

## *“I’m starting to pick up the Australian accent”*

Writing this BeaverTale means that over half of my exchange is over, and honestly it’s not something I want to think about yet. I’ve been in Australia for nearly seven months, which really freaks me out when I think about it, because it still feels like I just got here. Its hard to accept that I only have four months left, but I know that I am going to take in every moment and appreciate them all, even the bad ones, because this experience is almost over.

Now that I’ve been here for over half a year, a lot has changed. I have finally started getting used to getting in the car on the opposite side, looking right when I cross the street instead of left, I have begun to use some of the Aussie slang, and some people even say I’m starting to pick up the Australian accent. I’m finally starting to feel like a local, and I love it.



Since coming to Australia, I have made so many amazing friends that I know I’m going to stay in contact with forever. My Aussie friends have always made me feel so welcome and continue to every single day. It is going to be really hard to leave them at the end of my exchange, but I know that I will always be welcomed back. My host families have also all been so amazing, they have welcomed me into their homes and treated my like family and I will always be so grateful for what they’ve done for me.

The hardest part of my exchange in Australia was Christmas. As much as I love the warm weather here, it was really strange to me when it was 39 degrees on Christmas day. It was hard to spend Christmas with people I didn't know, but I enjoyed learning about their different traditions here, like having a BBQ on Christmas day. Although this is completely different to what I do in Canada on Christmas, I absolutely loved it.

Since being in Australia I have witnessed the hottest day ever on record for Swan Hill, my hometown. There have been many days where it has been over 40 degrees, but it reached 47.2, making it the hottest day in Swan Hill ever. On days like that, its hard for anyone to go outside, and only the very brave ones do. Although the Australians claim they "hate the heat" when its 37 degrees they claim it's a "nice day" and spend plenty of time outside.

During my summer holidays, I did a lot of travelling with other exchange students. In the beginning of January I went down to a city on the coast called Warrnambool with my host family. We had a house near the beach that we were staying in and it was amazing. We went down to the beach everyday, we surfed and swam, and it was so fun! After my host family left to go back to Swan Hill, I stayed in Warrnambool with my friend Lea, from France. Her host family was staying in a trailer park right on the beach in Warrnambool, so for the three days I spent there we went for walks along the beach, surfing, and swimming, it was so nice.



*Janick (exchange student from Denmark) and I on a beach in Warrnambool after going for a surf.*



*A few exchange students and I swimming in the ocean in Warrnambool.*



*At the 12 apostles.*

Finally, when the week was over and everyone went home, I went to stay in Geelong for a few days with my friend Erik, from Germany. His host parents took him and me to the Australian Open, which was such an exciting day. Once that was over, I returned home to Swan Hill just in time to start school again in February.



And that's where I am now. I have recently started school again, which I am really happy about because that means I get to see all of my friends again. This year in school I am taking 2 different math classes, English, food studies, and physical education. I am also preparing to do my debutant ball, which is an old-fashioned ball where women come out to society, but now its much more modernized and just something most girls do for fun. Every Sunday my partner and I go to dance practice to learn a dance that we will be doing at the deb in March. It is a formal event that all of my friends and family will come to, to watch my partner and me and all of the other pairs in the deb. It is so much fun and I can't wait!

I have absolutely loved the first half of my exchange, the good and the bad and I am so grateful for it all. Thank you so much for everyone who has put in hard work for me to be here, and a big thank you to everyone who is looking after me now. I can't wait to see what else is in store for me before I come home.

Cheers,

*Mackenzie*