



# Morgan

from Oakville Trafalgar  
to  
Australia

## *"A Life in a Year", It's Cheesy, but it's True*

*So, how was your Exchange?* This question, while simple and innocent in itself, is the most intimidating and scary thing I can think of right now. Because if people are asking me this question, it means my exchange is over. To try and sum up every experience, every memory, every laugh shared with new friends in order to answer that question is utterly impossible. My exchange was horrible, yet mind blowingly amazing at the same time. There were ups. There were downs. There were times I thought I might just have to call it quits and go back to the safety of my home. Then I would realize that I am home. That wherever I stand on this small, humongous earth, no matter how different and scary it may be, I can thrive there. I am home. And now I will go back to another home, an older home, except it will be brand new again. I will see my old, new friends again, and I will make more memories with them. I will continue living my life, but it won't be the one I left behind. Australia made sure of that.



Since my last report, I went on the trip of a lifetime with 49 other exchange students from 6 districts, including my own. We started in Mount Gambier, which is only an hour's drive away from me luckily. The bus picked our district up at noon, and we were off to Adelaide. Safari was finally happening!!

We didn't spend any time in Adelaide, arriving at 9pm and leaving 4am the next day to drive to Coober Pedy, which is a town that gets so hot that people build their houses underground to escape it. We looked around a bit that night, but again we were up at 5am to head off to our next destination, Uluru (Ayers Rock)!! One of Australia's icons, Uluru is a huge rock which is also a really important Aboriginal heritage site.



After that, we went to The Great Barrier Reef off of Airlie Beach!! The amount of life in that one area is amazing, we spent a full day on a cruise ship beside the reef snorkelling and eating. Next we went to the Gold Coast, where we spent most of the day at Movie World, then went to Surfers Paradise in the evening to walk around and have some free time.

Finally, we went to Sydney where we had the full day to ourselves to look around and enjoy, with dinner being in the Westfield tower, where I had what I think was the best meal of my life. Even though I was only with those other districts for 3 weeks, the bond we formed together was super strong, and we all have intentions of seeing each other again. It was a very teary goodbye for everyone at the end, because we were saying goodbye not only to lifelong friends but to the best 3 weeks of our lives.



Immediately after safari I moved to a new host family, who I'm with right now. They live right in the centre of Robe, so I'm back to town my first host family lived in. School was another thing that started back up as soon as I returned, and I'm onto my final term in Australia. Last week we went on a surf camp, where according to my instructor I picked it up really well because I was standing up within an hour and could turn and manoeuvre myself by day 3!

I could carry on forever about every small thing that helped shape my exchange into the life changing experience it was. I could write for ages about every single person I've met along the way, and how they have helped me grow as a person. But I don't think anyone has the patience for that, so I'll try it all down to a few key ideas. My host families have been a defining factor throughout my exchange. Through them I experienced a variety of different ways of life, some of which I struggled with more than others, but overall I enjoyed each one of them, and truly appreciate all that they did for me.

My location has also been a very unique part of everything I've experienced, as it's a stark contrast from the suburban lifestyle I was used to. However, I'd like to think that I've become well-adjusted to this place I've called home for the past 10 months. My friends, ohhh man I'm gonna miss my friends. We've only known each other for less than a year but honestly it feels like we might as well have grown up together. Between the exchange students in my district and my friends at home, it will be a hard thing to let go of. They have all changed me in one way or another, whether it's the Brazilians on safari teaching me to twerk or my school friends introducing me to the wonders of Rich Brian. We've all agreed that we will grow up to be multi-millionaires because that's the only way we can afford to visit everyone after exchange (although we've decided that everyone is going to Denmark for New Years).

I'd like to finish this all off with a sincere thank you. Thank you to Rotary Australia for taking me in and coping with me. Thank you to Rotary Canada for giving me the means to do this exchange, it has been absolutely life changing. Thank you to my host families for hosting me, feeding me, and generally putting up with me. Thank you to me family back in Canada, for supporting me and funding my exchange more than they probably should have. Love you guys. As my exchange narrows down to just 2 months left, I want to say to every potential exchange student; just go for it. There has never been a single May report that said "I wish I never went on exchange, should have stayed home." You are young. Everything is ahead of you. To go on exchange is an experience the cleverest of words could not begin to describe. To go on exchange is to be reborn. To have a family as large as earth itself. You will make memories you will never forget, and friends you will think about for the rest of your life. You will laugh, you will cry, you will do so many things that neither of us could ever predict. I wish I could tell you what exchange will do to you, but I can't because it just escapes description. The best way to find out is to do it for yourself.

Thank you to everyone so much, see you all back in the true north strong!!

Morgan