



# Morgan

from Oakville Trafalgar

to

Australia

*“So... am I Australian yet?”*

I have been in Australia for 7 months... that’s happened too quickly!! It seems like only yesterday I stepped off the plane into my new Australian life, overtired and confused yet feeling more alive than ever. I was always getting in the wrong side of the car, and I don’t wanna think about how many times I was nearly run over because I was looking the wrong way when crossing the street. The Australian accent was so foreign, and I sometimes forgot that the people here actually spoke English because of how thick their slang was. But now here I am all this time later, feeling like a local and wondering if I’ll actually remember my Canadian customs when I get back! I’ve made some amazing friends I know I’ll see again after my exchange, and lifelong memories I could never forget.



It’s difficult to try and recount all that has happened since November, there are so many things that it’s all become a bit of a blur!! Very soon after sending my last report I met up with the other exchange students for the Australian outbounds final briefing in Ballarat, staying overnight with locals. It was a little boring sitting through all their lectures, and by the time insurance came around we decided as a group that we should just head outside

so that we could talk without interrupting them. This was only our second time meeting each other, but by then we had already become each other’s best friends.

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Reluctantly I headed back home, but soon after I returned it was time for the summer break!! Since Australia's seasons are opposite to Canada's, we get our 6-week summer vacation from December 15<sup>th</sup> to January 29<sup>th</sup>. For the first couple weeks, all I really did was help my host dad Jason with his trucking business, where he transports and herds up sheep, pigs, and cows around our area. It really stood out to me just how well trained their sheepdogs were!! He was almost having conversations with them saying things like "Fetch em up" and when he gestured in a certain direction, the dogs would know exactly what to do and where to guide the sheep.

On the second weekend of the break I went with them to visit their relatives in Adelaide overnight, since they wouldn't see them before Christmas. There was this amazing light show set up outside the Adelaide Brewery which stretched on for nearly a kilometre!! We headed home the next day, and soon enough it was Christmas! The Aussie traditions are quite like ours in Canada, and unlike some of the other exchange students I didn't get very homesick simply because I couldn't associate a sunny 40 degrees temperature with Christmas day. But that doesn't mean I enjoyed it any less, we went over to my host dad's sisters house in Mount Gambier for lunch and I ate so much they nearly had to roll me out the door. Christmas day was bittersweet as well, because it meant that I would be leaving my host family in 2 days time. They drove me to my new home in a beautiful town called Beachport, where my new host parents Carolynne Sutton, Peter Hill, and my new host brother Liam Mills live. One of the best parts about the move is that I'm now only a 5 minute drive away from a 16km long beach, which also has the best sunsets I've ever seen. My first night there the sunset was absolutely stunning, I tried taking photos of it but they just don't do the real thing enough justice because it really was beautiful. I've gone down there to see many sunsets since then, but that one is still the best. They've kept me much more active, taking me kayaking out on the



ocean a couple times and teaching me how to surf and boogie board. And the action didn't end there.

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Only 2 weeks into my stay with them, and it was time for the week long mini safari with the 14 other inbounds! We started our trip in Mount Gambier, where we went kayaking up and down a river before having a barbecue outside. We headed up to Portland next for another 2 days, where we first went sandboarding and surfing, then we did some sightseeing around the city and waterskiing/tubing. Our final destination was Warnambool, where we spent 3 days. While there I went surfing for the day (it was 45 degrees, the hottest day of the year), sightseeing around the town, and we even did a drive up the Great Ocean Road where I got to see the 12 Apostles!! It was an amazing experience, I really connected with the other exchange students during our time together.

Almost immediately following my Mini Safari was a 4 day trip up to Sydney to meet up with some relatives living there!! They're not technically related to me but my grandparents were neighbours with their family, and they became such close family friends that we just mutually consider each other family.

They took me to see the Sydney Opera House, which was absolutely STUNNING!!

Their location couldn't have been better, they live only 5 minutes away from Bondi Beach and a couple minutes walk away from Coogee. Even though I nearly drowned myself multiple times trying to bodysurf the waves at Bondi, it was still sooo fun and I really hope I get to go back one day.



I cannot thank both my sponsoring and host Rotary clubs for giving me such an amazing opportunity!! I'm having the adventure of a lifetime, these memories I'm making every day will stick with me for the rest of my life and remind me of the amazing year I'm currently having. To any student exchange hopefuls, I URGE you to go for it!! You have no idea how much you can change in a year, and the things you do on exchange cannot be done anywhere else. Thank you again to everyone who has made my year possible and successful so far, lets hope the second half goes just as well!

Toodle-oo

MORGAN