



DIARIES FROM DOWN UNDER

Unveiling and unpacking the
ultimate study abroad adventure
throughout Australia

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Australia, known for its stunning landscapes, unique wildlife, and vibrant cities, has long been a top destination for students seeking a study abroad experience. We sat down with Chloe West, a 21-year-old college student from the Rhode Island attending University of Rhode Island to get a



Img 1. Photo taken in Manly beach, a 20 minute scenic ferry ride from the heart of Sydney Australia. An absolute must see area when in Sydney.

firsthand account of her thrilling journey as she embarked on a semester Down Under. “I’ve always been passionate about environmental science, and always knew I wanted to go abroad. Since I have dietary restrictions and allergies, I knew I needed to go to an english speaking country. Australia seemed like the perfect option.” Chloe explained what brought her to her decision, but choosing the country is only part of the battle, the next step was choosing a school. “I knew nothing about any schools there (Australia), I mean who would. I just found one that fit the transfer credit requirements and hoped it would be in a good place. I will never forget sitting down as the trip approached to try and figure out anything I could about the school.” Although West

seemed to have a very relaxed approach to her study abroad experience, the travel to get there was anything but. After 39 grueling hours of travel, she finally touched down in Cairns, a city close to the northern tip of Australia known for its access to the Great Barrier Reef and vast jungles filled with deadly animals. Only her first few days would be spent here, getting to know the other 30 people within her program whilst crossing off multiple bucket list items. Scuba diving, skydiving, petting kangaroos and hugging koalas, this five day orientation was a perfect introduction to the next 4 months of her life. After a week full of activities, it was time to head back onto a plane and finally landed in the town with her new campus. “The first week was a complete blur” she explained. Adjusting to a new timezone, new campus, and a completely different atmosphere took some time, but after a few weeks learning to balance work and play she began to plan trips to explore this new side of the world. First on the itinerary was the iconic Byron Bay, only an hour south from campus this local surf hotspot was full of breathtaking views, charming boutiques and hippies as far as the eye could see. This extremely laid back town was only a further introduction to the Aussie lifestyle. Although the town itself was a dream, Chloes first experience at a hostel was anything but. “It was a group of 7 of us.



Img 2. An unbelievable early morning sunrise over the iconic Byron Bay in the Northern area of New South Wales.

5 girls and 2 boys all staying at this summer camp type of compound. Walking in it was so different than anywhere I've ever traveled. Quickly we realized we wouldn't all be staying in the same room and would be bunking up with strangers for the weekend. Although this was off putting to say the least, we made the most of it and sweat through our sheets in the Aussie summer heat". Next up was a trip to Brisbane to see the 3rd largest city in Australia and explore the Australian city life. After an amazing concert the quick weekend getaway ended and she headed back to campus. "It was hard to balance school and all the trips we had planned, but honestly the teachers were unbelievably understanding" she explained



Img 3: views of the sydney harbor bridge and the infamous opera house from across the harbor

the difference between US schools and Australian universities. "The classes were a lot harder than I expected and the grading system completely freaked me out when I got my first grade back. An 83% there is still an A which I think was a large adjustment for all of us when getting our grades back." After the Brisbane trip, it was back onto a plane to travel to the largest and most iconic city in Australia. "Seeing the opera house for the first time is something I will never forget. Its so much bigger than I expected and made me remember how far away from home I was. There were a few times throughout the trip where we would see something and were just immediately humbled by these experiences and how lucky we were to be there". Now that Chloe was over halfway though



Img 4. A breathtaking view of the Great Barrier Reef from above. Off the coast of Cairns on the northern tip of Australia.

the semester, the end began to set in. As finals approached, she had one final major trip which ended up being her favorite. A long weekend in the Whitsundays, sailing around the most beautiful islands with 50 other strangers and travelers looking for adventure. As the weekend came to a close, Chloe made the most of the experience and jumped off the boat into the crystal clear water one last time. With only 2 weeks left and the stress of finals setting in, Chloe made the most of her time remaining with her closest friends and program members. "We all became one big family. No one would ever know we had just met 4 months ago. The entire experience was like being thrown back into freshman year in the best way possible." After reminiscing on the different trips and stories from her time in Australia, Chloe concluded by explaining that she will tell anyone willing to listen that if they have "Considered study abroad or travel in general that you have to go. If you are thinking about it, and have the means to do it, don't even think about it and just go. Book the 3 ticket and don't look back until you have to."