



Frances

From Kitchener to

Australia

*Too hot in the City? Just move the town underground!*

Hello from the beautiful land of Oz. it seems like a dream that I've been here more than 10 months. I can still remember the fear I felt when I first stepped off the plane ready to embrace my new life. Now it feels like I've been here for my entire life, and that I've known my host families for years rather than only a month or two. It feels like I've been with my new friends since preschool. I have also found myself falling in love with the city I have called my home for the past ten months. I know where all the best sushi and pizza places are, I know where to go to see a beautiful sunset over the bay, and I know which bus to take to go surfing or go to the beach. That's what I'm going to miss the most about Australia is the beaches. I've been to so many beaches I can't even name them all I've been to the pure white silica sands of the Whitsunday's to the bluest of waters in Southern Australia and I even watched the worlds best surfers battle it out for the title of the Ripcurl Pro at Bells Beach.

So here's what you've missed since my last report. I went on a three week trip around Australia with thirty two other exchange students from around the world. We all met up for the first time in Adelaide and it was as if we had known each other for ages. We all introduced each other and got on the bus to begin our 8-hour drive to

Adelaide. The next day we got free time in Adelaide and then moved on to the Gladstone Goal where we had a haunted ghost tour at night time which was actually very terrifying as they made us walk into the cells by ourselves where inmates had been hung or had committed suicide. Then we drove to the town of Coopa Pedy a town with a huge opal deposit where the heat was so unbearable that the entire town moved underground and so we spent the night under the earth.

Then we went to Uluru or more commonly known as Ayers Rock. Unfortunately we could not climb Uluru because they had forecasted rain for that day but we still got to do an eleven kilometer walk around the base of the rock and we got to see it from every angle and the next day we did a three hour walk around the rim of Kings Canyon and then we rode a camel! If you know anything about how a camel stands up you would know that it is a terrifying experience because a camel lifts it's back up first throwing u forward and then it's front up throwing you back and when it started running I was positive I was going to fall off.

A few days afterwards we flew from Alice Springs, the centre of Australia, to Cairns on the coast. It was beautiful and while we were there we visited the Daintree Rainforest and scuba dived the iconic Great Barrier Reef which is one of the seven natural wonders of the world. It was incredible seeing all the beautiful fish and coral, I also saw two turtles and a shark. Then we drove down to Airlie Beach, the passageway to the Whitsunday Islands. We got to the Whitsunday's on a speedboat and snorkeled for two hours, and then we went to a lookout and got an incredible view of Hill Inlet and had a BBQ on the world famous Whitehaven Beach.

We went to Dream world in Surfers Paradise, Surfed in Byron Bay, and did a tour of the Sydney Harbor but all good things must come to an end and I'm back in Geelong and back to school prepared to make the most out of the rest of my last month of exchange. I got

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to do some incredible things on Safari and on my exchange but what I will remember forever will be the incredible people I met and the new friends I made from all around the world. I can't wait to go meet them again in their home countries. I cannot thank Rotary enough for creating this incredible program.

Love

*Frances*