



WUR Goes Abroad

1. Student Information

Field of study in Wageningen	Plant Science
Study period exchange	05/08/2019 until 30/11/2019
Country (exchange)	Australia
City (exchange)	Sydney
University (exchange)	University of Sydney
Faculty (exchange)	Faculty of Science

2. Motivation for exchange

Why did you choose to go on study exchange?

Mainly to improve my English, learn about another culture and see how the teaching works at another university.

What is the reason you chose for this country/university?

It had always been my dream to study in Australia. Australia is a great place to improve your English and the people are very friendly. It's also really nice from a plant science perspective, Australia has a lot of different climates, which results in very different plants and the way how they are adapted to the climate also differs a lot from the plants in the Netherlands.

3. Accessibility to reach destination

Do you have any tips to reach your exchange destination?

It is the easiest to walk to and from campus, most of the student accommodation is on or very close to campus. Busses can get quite expensive, however as an exchange student you can apply for a concession card, with which you can travel for half price.

Sunday public transport is really cheap, only \$2.80 for all of them (including the normal ferries).

I got a bike here, but I would not recommend getting one, cycling through the city is quite scary, since you have to cycle in between all of the cars. I did use it to go to one of my classes that was not on campus.

4. University and studying

Could you provide some general information about the followed courses?

	Course	ECTS	Short description of the contents	Appreciation of course: 1(low) – 5(high)	Remarks
1	Australian Wildlife Biology	7.5	This class teaches everything about Australian wildlife, from crocs to koalas and from frogs to birds. There is a focus on the adaptations the species have made.	5	The class includes 5 zoo visits.
2	Marine Biology	7.5	Teaches about marine life, so animals and plants. The shores in the southern hemisphere compared to northern hemisphere, barnacles. There are a few field practices, to mangroves, the shore and a snorkelling practical.	5	The class includes quite some statistics.
3	Terrestrial Plant Ecology	7.5	Teaches about the role fire plays in Australian ecosystems, the main vegetation types, eucalypts, (sustainable) forest harvesting, and how to understand and make a land management plan.	5	This class had an amazing fieldtrip, there was no final exam.
4	Learning in Outdoor Education	7.5	This is a class with other exchange students, it's focussed on experiences and experiencing nature. There are two field trips where you get a better understanding of the nature around Sydney.	5	Only runs for the first 6 weeks, there is no final exam.

How is the study formalized? (E.g. study forms, academic level, examination, workload, lesson material)

There are a lot of assignments during the semester, which puts a lot less pressure on the final exam.

The academic level is comparable to Wageningen.

There are lectures, tutorials, and practical's. There are a lot more field practicals though.

None of my classes had a textbook, so the lesson material is mainly the Powerpoint slides and the practical material.

What is the culture of the university? (E.g. how approachable are the lecturers, engagement with local students, what are the differences with the WUR)

Everyone is very focussed and hardworking, no one talks during lectures.

Most lecturers are very approachable, but this varies for all classes. All of mine were at least approachable via email.

The engagement with local students really depends on the class you are taking. It is in general quite hard to get close to them, you really need to put in some effort, but they are very nice.

What does the university offer the student additionally? (E.g. Catering, sports facilities, laundry facilities)

There are quite some food options on campus, but my accommodation had meals included in the rent. There are some sport fields on campus, as well as two gyms, one has a climbing wall in it and the other one has a pool and basketball field. The gym membership was included in my accommodation as well. Laundry is usually not included (there is a machine, but you will have to insert coins) and can get quite expensive.

5.Housing-travelling-living

What are the possibilities for housing? (E.g. Availability to sign up for a room on campus, private rooms, rent rates)

Housing is really expensive in Sydney. The university offers a guaranteed room to exchange students. I got a shared room with 3 meals a day and gym membership included.

What is the culture of the country like? (E.g. Differences with home, local cuisine, habits, manners)

The culture is quite comparable, when they go out, they usually go a lot earlier in the evening. The Asian food is really good in Sydney, probably the best you will find outside of Asia.

Could you give a general price indication of the place of residence compared to living in Wageningen?

Anywhere from \$300 to \$600 a WEEK so that's between €185 and €370 a week. The more expensive options generally include meals.

Could you give some information about public transport infrastructure? (E.g. cost public transport card, taxi prices, how to travel to the university)

The public transport is quite good, busses go everywhere, and run until late. They are

rarely on time, and they don't have signs where they will stop, so you will just have to figure that out yourself. Most people walk to the university.

6. Free time

What are must-sees in the area? (E.g. nearby destinations, how do you prefer to travel, when to plan)

Of course the Sydney Opera House and the Harbour Bridge. The royal botanical gardens, Manly and Bondi Beach as well. There are quite some museums in the area. The Blue Mountains and the Royal National Park are must-sees as well. Going around the country is another option.

I usually travel by public transport, it's pretty cheap to travel on Sundays.

What does not appear in the travel guide, but is worth a visit?

Walk around Newtown, which is really close to the University.

Do you have general tips and tricks about leisure time? (E.g. recommendations for restaurants, going out)

C9 (cloud 9) is my favourite gelato place. Dumplings are a must try, from anywhere. Newtown has quite a few nice places to eat. The ivy and sidebar are nice places to go out.

7.Challenges & best moment abroad

What was a challenge you have experienced?

Having a roommate was quite a struggle, since we were very different people, and she didn't want to put in effort to make it work.

What was your best memory abroad?

All the nice people I got to meet in those few months, and some of them will be lifelong friends.

8. Contact details

Is the reader allowed to contact the writer?	yes	no <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Name/e-mail	Femke Hoogkamer / femke.hoogkamer@wur.nl	