

EXCHANGE REPORT



DEAKIN UNIVERSITY

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

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KEA – 5. Semester

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Before leaving.....	2-3
Arriving to Australia	3-4
Deakin University	4-5
Living in Melbourne.....	5
Public transportation.....	5
Suburbs	5
Sport	5-6
Events	6
Food.....	7
Travels	7-8
Conclusion	8
More Photos	9



Introduction

I was fortunate enough to take my 5th semester in Melbourne at Deakin University. The thought of studying abroad had never really crossed my mind until my girlfriend mentioned that it could be a possibility. So I contacted the international Coordinator at KEA and asked about my options for doing an exchange semester...

And what do you know, now I just got back after spending an amazing five month in Australia.

Obviously, you are going to gain many things by studying abroad, such as international experience, improving your language skills, network and so on. And I can for sure cross all of those things of the list, but for me the most important thing I have gained is a personal growth. By living in another country, you learn so much about different cultures and you are going to find out a lot about yourself, which in my case have been a very positive experience.

I am a bygningskonstruktør student with a professionretning in Facility Management (FM), which I had to skip a little in order to study abroad. Because of a few personal factors I chose to go on the 3rd trimester which is called T3. Going for the T3, your options to choose a specific unit are a bit more limited, so you have to keep in mind(check beforehand).

Before leaving

You should be aware of some practical things before you leave, such as:

- Applying for a student visa
- Taking an English test
- OSHC (Bupa) –overseas student health cover
- Find accommodation for when you arrive
- Choose your units
- Search for scholarships
- Buy fly tickets early to get a good price

You have to have your letter of acceptance in order to apply for a student visa. In my case because I was travelling with my girlfriend we had to provide a lot of evidence to be able to travel as de facto partners on my student visa. It is not a problem to travel with your partner, you just have to prove that you are in a relationship. The evidence you have to provide could basically be anything that proves you are

together but if you choose to travel with your partner you will get more information about it. And from the moment we send our visa application, it took about 2 days before we had it. And I believe we paid just under 1000 AUS\$ which at the time was 5400 KR. With a student visa for Australia, you are allowed to work 20 hours a week plus your de facto partner can 15 hours a week. If you are an international student going to Australia it is mandatory to buy the OSHC which we paid 650 AUS\$ for two people which covered us the entire stay plus some. Then comes the flight tickets and accommodation on top of that. So you have to be prepared to spend some money before you leave.

We booked our tickets a little late and paid 14000 KR return, which I think is an okay price but I believe that we could have saved a little by buying them earlier. And there are so many webpages that sums up the cheapest tickets at that moment.

You can choose to live on campus but it is expensive, we lived on our own in the city because they are only providing accommodation to students at Deakin.

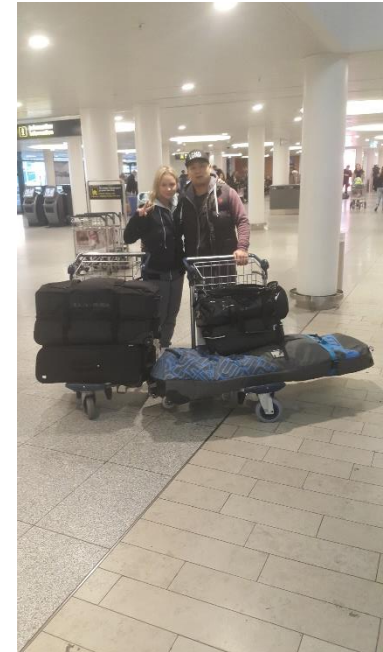
But from talking to classmates and fellow student at the campus it is really expensive, one guy I met said that he was paying 350-400 AUS\$ a week to stay there. So he moved out and found he's own place for about 200-250 a week for a room. But this is the Burwood campus located in Melbourne and I could image that prices are a bit more student friendly at other campuses. My girlfriend and I rented a two bedroom apartment in city for a 1000 AUS\$ a month which is cheap, but that just shows that if you spend a little time you are able to find something and save some money for the fun parts.

Arriving to Australia

Instead of checking in at a hostel, we already booked Airbnb from home, in which we found very comfortable because we already knew that we were gonna be tired and jetlagged after travelling for 26+ hours.

We got on the skybus (18 AUS\$ per person) which takes you straight from the airport to the city center (Southern Cross Station) where there is connections to everywhere.

When you do your Deakin application you can choose to be picked up from the airport by a pick-up service, provided by Deakin, its gonna cost you a fee but not as much as a taxi. I believe it will drop you off wherever you want. But I don't know I didn't use it.



After you get a good sleep and actually realizing that you arrived to Australia you wanna just smile and enjoy. I would recommend as well as the school does that you arrive minimum 5 days prior to school starts, so you have some time to get familiar with your surroundings and get some practical stuff done as well as you get to know how everything works.

Two things I would recommend you do as soon as you are on your feet is to buy an Australia phone number and set up a bank account. We bought a Vodaphone starter package for 30 AUS\$ and that was enough for a month and then we just recharged 30 AUS\$ every month which gave you unlimited talk, unlimited texts and 5-10 GB data depending on campaigns.

Bank Accounts were also very easy to set up, we went in to commonwealth bank and 20 minutes later you walk out with a MasterCard debit, which I think they are used to giving how many people comes to Australia for an exchange semester or full education.

Deakin University

As mentioned earlier I was there for trimester 3 (T3) which is the quiet trimester because most of the students are on a summer break. Nevertheless, it was cool to try something different than KEA.

The Burwood campus that I attended was a really nice big University and lecture theatres like you see in American movies, at least that's what I thought when I saw them.

The Burwood campus is in Melbourne and if you live in the city you will have a tram (75) stopping right in front of the University (the stop is called Deakin University).

When you go for the first intro meeting you will meet the other exchange students and get a starter package with information, calendar, your OSHC card and other useful/useless things but it is nice to meet other students and have chat and maybe make new friends on day 1.

Another way to be social and meet new people is the beach welcome party, which is only for T1 and T2 where you drive to The Great Ocean Road for two days and surf, hike, drink, do yoga and all sort of social stuff.

Before you start going to classes you will get a username and password for the Deakin version of "Fronter", and it is called CloudDeakin.

CloudDeakin is also where you will allocate your classes and tutorials, so if you do it as soon as they open up for it, you can make your own schedule and be most efficient with your time. CloudDeakin is also where you will get all your information and see all your units, locations, exams, turn in assignments, use the library online and basically everything you need to have a successful trimester.



I personally didn't buy any books for the units I had, even though they recommend it. Instead I found out the I could just go and rent the books for free at the school library and just extend them every 10 days, it worked for me and I asked at the library if I was allowed to do so and they said yes, you can do it 52 times. The reason I didn't buy the books is because each book cost around 150-200 AUS\$ and I needed 5 books. So I saved on books to spend on traveling.

The Burwood campus is located in Melbourne, and I really enjoyed living in the big city where something is always happening and super easy to get around. I went to visit the Geelong and the Warrnambool campus as well, which is also a nice campuses. Geelong is close to the water, but about an hour outside of Melbourne by train, Warrnambool is a bit futher away and seems like a small suburb, but I can't say much about either, All I know is that the Burwood campus was the perfect fit for me.

Living in Melbourne

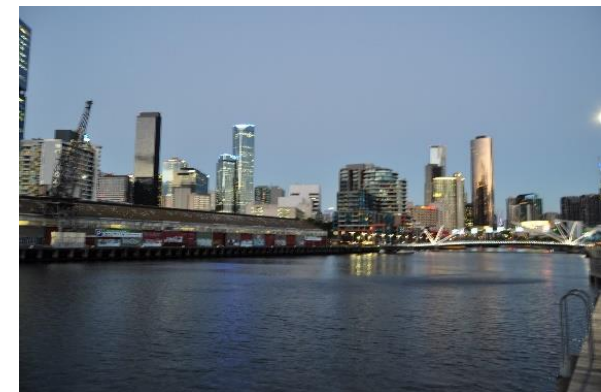
Melbourne is a huge city comparing to anything you experienced in Denmark. Traveling between suburbs or from one end of the city to another might take over two hours. You will have to keep in mind to choose a place to live that is not to far away from school. Each suburb has its own little social life, so you don't need to worry about the options to go out or do everyday shopping if you choose living in a suburb.

Public Transportation

Public transportation is quite expensive in Melbourne it will coat you about 9 AUS\$ a day to use public transportation and if you get stopped without a ticket it will cost you 280 AUS\$ on the spot, so I'll recommend getting student concession card as soon as possible to save 50% on your daily travels and many other thing. In a city you can choose between trams, trains, buses and the 'city circle' train which works as central tram you can just hop on and off because it is in the free tram zone connecting most popular city junctions. The free tram zone, is a zone in Melbourne CBD which runs inside central business district, where most tourist attractions are placed as well.

Suburbs

Suburbs in Melbourne might vary a lot. We chose to live in a city center, within free tram zone. We had 24/7 shops around the corner, restaurants, museums, sport stadiums, etc. For those reasons it is definitely worth it to stay there. Plus most of the places are new apartments with gym/swimming pool facilities. On the down side, I have to admit there is not much



of a 'aussie' spirit in a central Melbourne, plenty of tourists, people shopping all day and ordering their take-away food. It is always busy, the city never sleeps, so it might be a good thing for some, but pretty disturbing for the others.

Before moving to Docklands in the free tram zone, where we stayed most of our time, we lived in St. Kilda and Kew. St. Kilda along with Fitzroy and Carlton are the most common spots for young people and backpackers. So if you are looking for a place in the city with a lot of party, backpackers and other international students, beach chillin' and all that, I would recommend to live there or at least go and hang out at night.

Kew on the other hand, was far from the city noises and hidden in forest residential area. If you want to experience something more local and more quiet, I would recommend to go check it out.

Sport

Melbourne is known as one of the most sport oriented cities in the world. And I can confirm that. There wasn't a single weekend, without some sort of sport event such as rugby, cricket, or football to watch. On top of the regular leagues, Melbourne is hosting big sport events as The Australia Open, UFC fights, F1, Sailing Cup or Polo Championship. You should check the city events and try to experience it live.

On a little side note, I was even invited to come and train with the Ice hockey team Melbourne Ice, which was a lot of fun and another great experience.

Events

Besides sport events, there are all the cultural arrangements. Each suburb is throwing their own local food market or open sky cinemas. But the biggest event spot in Melbourne is the Fed Square (located by the Flinders Street Station) where almost every week different theme festivals took place. There were eg. Vietnamese culture festival, Chinese Lunar New Year Festival, Ecological Festival, Manga Festival, Comedians festival, Bike Race, etc. To keep updated with all these events, I would recommend going down into Information Center which is also located at Fed Square. There is plenty of brochures and catalogs with all the events as well as possible trips in and around Melbourne.



Food

There is infinity of food options in Melbourne. In the city central you can find many affordable take aways as well as food courts (located in each shopping mall) and all kind of asian cousine restaurants. However, I would recommend doing a little research and travelling between suburbs for some more unique food experiences. Melbourne has a lot to offer and you will find couisines from all around the world.

Travels

My girlfriend and I really loves to travel and in those five month we were there we really got to experience a lot. But even though, we would like to come back one day to see the places we did not make due to limited time.

Melbourne is located in the state Victoria, which have a lot to offer, just remember that even though it is one state the distances are not as you know them from home. So just remember to count it in your planning that everything takes a little/a lot longer than you are used to. And as far as I know Australia is larger than all of Europe combined!

To write about all of our travels and the places we have seen it would be a long essay, but I will list some of the places that are really worth going while you are there:

- Sydney (The Opera House, Bondi Beach, and just a beautiful city that has everything)
- Adelaide
- Uluru (Ayers rock and a 25 hour drive from Melbourne)
- The Great Ocean Road (12 Apostle, wild Koala's, nature)
- Brisbane
- Fraser Island (the only sand island with a rain forest, wild dingo's)
- Stradbroke island



- The gold coast (Sufers paradise)
- Bayron bay (the Gold Coast is called sufers paradise, but Bayron Bay is probably what real sufers would call paradise)

In total we traveled through 5 states, Victoria, South Australia, Northern territory, Queensland and New South Wales.

No matter if you like to travel or not, I highly recommend that you go and see, experience and feel some of Australia's wild nature. It is worth every penny and a memory for a lifetime :D I

Conclusion

I have had an amazing exchange semester and I'm forever grateful to myself for doing it, and to be able to share it with my girlfriend just made it even more enjoyable.

I gained a lot on a personal level and learned new skills and ways to think through school. Met many new different people and made new friendships. I can only recommend that you try it yourself.

One thing I would recommend that I would change if I should do it again, would be going for T1 or T2 for two reasons. 1. more life on campus and more units. 2. you will be delayed for your 6th semester back home. Yes Australia is an expensive country, but so are Denmark. But I can promise you Australia is way more rich on experiences that will last forever.



