

# EXCHANGE REPORT



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Deakin Waterfront Campus

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## Introduction

I'm studying "Construction Management & Architectural Technology" at KEA and I decided to spend my 4th semester (July-October, Trimester 2) at Deakin Waterfront in Geelong, Australia.

## Why Australia?

In previous studies I have had an exchange semester in EU with Erasmus+. Therefore, this time I decided to go further overseas to an English speaking country. My one and only priority was Australia and since KEA has a partnership with Deakin University in Geelong, it was the only choice for me.

## Preparation for Australia

The application to Australia takes a long time. Therefore, it is advised to start preparing the documents one semester in advance. In my case, I had an appointment with Andreas (International Coordinator) just after the winter holidays in February 2018. Firstly, you need to apply through the KEA platform and get nominated. Secondly, you need to make an English test and at least pass with a C1 level as the final score, and thirdly, you need to submit the final application through the Deakin Platform. All the forms are quite easy to follow, and if you have any questions, your International Coordinator will be happy to navigate you.

In my case, I received a letter of acceptance from Deakin University just 2 weeks before my departure, which was quite stressful and unusual. Therefore, I needed to apply for Visa and book tickets in the last 2 weeks.

### Visa

Before booking the tickets it is strongly recommended to apply for student Visa. Before the Visa application you need to get BUPA Insurance, which is required by the University and the Department of Home Affairs. The link to application will be sent by Deakin University.

The price of BUPA Insurance was 300 AUD (~1500 DKK). After the payment, I received my Insurance within the next few days. The next step was a Visa application. Be aware, the application contains of 25-26 pages and requires at least a few good hours for filling it.

The price of Student Visa was 585 AUD (~2800 DKK). After the application was submitted and the payment was done I received my Visa after 11 hours. However, it varies from student to student, some received it within a few days and for some it took a couple of weeks. I would advise to start the application as soon as you receive your letter of acceptance.

### Tickets

Since, I needed to book tickets just a couple of weeks before my departure, I paid more than the usual price would be. In my case, the price was around 9.200 DKK both ways (Copenhagen – Doha – Melbourne).

### Extras

From the start I knew that I would stay longer in Australia and would be travelling, therefore I took care of an extra insurance from Denmark. It costed an extra 4.000 DKK for half a year of travelling insurance. However, prices and coverage depends on the insurance company.

Also, in order to not lose my Danish phone number, I called to the phone company and arranged for my subscription to be put on hold until I returned to Denmark.

If you plan to travel after exams, make sure to have all the needed vaccinations (depending of the country you go).

## Arrival to Australia

I arrived to Melbourne on 29<sup>th</sup> of June, 2018. The University provides a free shuttle from the airport. You will receive this offer via e-mail. However, it is advised to register before the set deadline and provide the exact address of your stay, it might be your future residence, hotel, hostel, Airbnb etc.

## Accommodation

The start of T2 was on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July, however the Orientation week started on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. Therefore, it was recommended to arrive in advance and find a place to live.

Since I arrived just before the Orientation Week, I booked a room in advance at the Waterfront Residence (300 m from Deakin University). I stayed there for 11 nights (temporary stay). During my stay I found a room in a private house. It is definitely easier to find a place to live in Geelong than it is in Copenhagen. Therefore, it didn't cause any stress or take too much time. My priorities were: affordable price, location within walking distance to University and great flat-mates. I was lucky enough to get such a room.

The prices vary from 110 AUD to 280 AUD and up per week, and the deposit (bond) is either 2 weeks or 1 month stay or sometimes it is even not required.

## Cycling in Australia

It is very rare to see someone on a bike. If you want to get attention, then definitely start cycling and people will notice you ☺

In general, public transportation is very poor in Australia, especially in Geelong, the last bus is leaving just before 8 pm. Therefore, I would advise to consider living closer to the University (which is located near main street) or simply get a bike.

## Phone provider and Bank account

During the first days, I bought a subscription to an Australian phone service provider (for no particular reason I chose Vodafone), where the monthly payment was around 200 DKK for 6-8 GB of data.

I also decided to open an Australian Bank account (CommonWealth). It is free for students and I received my credit card within the 1<sup>st</sup> week.

## First shock

Surprisingly, it was the weather! Winter in Australia is cold and windy, especially in Geelong. Most of the properties don't have a proper heating, so when the temperature reaches zero degrees, the inside temperature is also very low. If you arrive for winter trimester T2, make sure to have warm clothes.

## Prices

Based on my experience, prices are either the same like in Denmark or slightly cheaper. However, remember it costs quite a lot to get ready for Australia (tickets, Visa, insurances etc.).

## Units, seminars & exams

According to an agreement with KEA, I needed to follow 3 Units (Courses) at Deakin Waterfront.

You need to choose the courses while you are in Denmark, however you can always choose something else during the 1<sup>st</sup> week of studies.

In the beginning, I registered for 4 Units, and after the first days I resigned from one unit and left only 3 as it was advised by KEA.

My chosen units were:

First Unit:

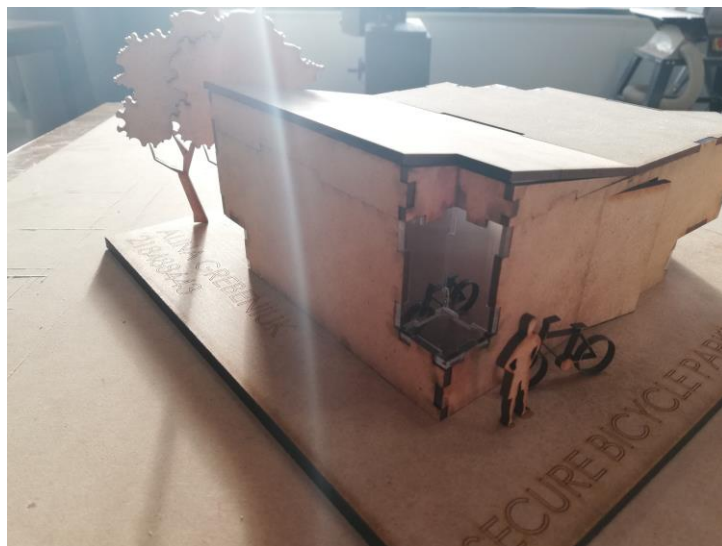
SRC221 Modelling Studio (with Michael Sharman)

It was one of the most challenging and creative courses for me at Deakin Waterfront. This unit was all about creative thinking and representing the architectural designs through MicroStation program. We had 2 individual assignments; the first assessment was to find an object and model it in the program, while the second assessment was about getting inspired of the shapes of the first object and design a building, using the same modelling program.

Then we were supposed to laser-cut the building in 1:50 scale, make a poster and portfolio and present it on the last final day.

I learned a lot and overall I really enjoyed the unit, though it was tough and required lots of time.

Personal advice: Don't skip the lectures and seminars (especially seminars!), try to finish the weekly assignments just before Sunday night, otherwise it will be hard to follow up in the end of trimester. Don't be afraid to ask questions. Be creative.



*Assessment 2:*

*Secure Bicycle  
parking building  
(1:50).*

*Laser cut.*

*Designed in  
MicroStation.*

2<sup>nd</sup> Unit:

SRM310 Project Planning & Scheduling (with Dr Hong Xian Li and Vanessa Whittem)

This unit was about understanding the planning concepts for construction projects. We had 3 assessments: one as a group project and the last two on an individual basis.

The group assignment was challenging, simply because the fellow students were already aware of the topic from previous trimesters, while for me it was all new from the beginning.

The last two individual assignments were done using MS Project, where all the developed assumptions should be written in a report.

As an outcome I learned a lot during the first part of the Unit, however when we started working with MS Project, I felt I knew most of it from the previous semesters back at KEA, even though it was still interesting to go through it again and have project examples from the Australian construction field.

Personal advice: Don't skip the lectures and seminars (especially seminars!), don't be shy to tell that you don't know the topic, finish all the assignments during the seminars and ask for help if needed.



### Third Unit:

#### SRT351 Construction & Structures 3 (with Dr Glenn Costin)

During this Unit, I extended my knowledge of multi-story and high-rise buildings.

We had one group project, where we investigated the construction concepts, process and structural requirements of a multi-story building (our own choice), located in Australia. Later we made a poster and presented it in front of the class.

It was also required to submit an individual technology portfolio, which were containing vignettes (weekly assignments) which could be done during the weekly seminars.

As the last, we had the final written closed book exam, which contained multiply-choice- and open questions.

As an outcome: It was very interesting to learn about high-rise buildings, especially when it was a completely new topic for me, so I definitely learned a lot.

Personal advice: do all the weekly vignettes on time, participate in the seminars and ask questions.

As a general advice: Introduce yourself to the teachers during the first lectures, let them know you are an exchange student and that you might need extra help or explanation. From my personal experience, the teaching team is very friendly and is always willing to help, so definitely don't be shy 😊

#### Preparation for exams at the library

Deakin Waterfront has a huge comfortable library with lots of seats, tables, sofas, open spaces and closed rooms. It definitely has the right study environment. Personally, I did all my assignments from there. More, it works 24/7 and the security guards are around, so you can easily leave your stuff and come back later.

### Life outside school hours

#### Events

During the Orientation Week, we had a Welcome Beach Trip to Lorne, where the exchange students from all the different Deakin campuses were mixed together. We had a chance to try surfing, yoga, hiking and mountain biking. I would definitely recommend this trip.

You should receive information about this trip along with the acceptance letter from Deakin University.

The price was 100 AUD (~500 DKK).

#### Travelling

In the middle of August, we had a winter break (1 week), where together with my friends I went to Tasmania. I enjoyed this place a lot, lots of places to visit and just enjoy the beautiful nature.

After, I was lucky enough to be done with my exams already in the middle of October, so I had lots of time to travel around, before the next semester at KEA starts. I went to Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Tasmania and drove the eastern coast of Australia. It was an unforgettable experience and a well-deserved vacation after tough, but interesting trimester at Deakin.

Tip: Your Student Visa will expire just 1 month after your last exam and since you want to stay longer in Australia, make sure to prolong your Visa or get a Visitor Visa instead. There are few options for Visa extension, however it is better to call the Legal Service yourself and find out how to do it, since different citizenships have different requirements. By the way, Deakin DUSA Office (located at Waterfront Campus) can provide you with Legal Service contacts, where they will try to help you with all your questions.

## Conclusion

Australia was always my dream destination and I'm happy I made my dream come true, more I got a chance to study at the great University, met new people and travelled the world.

Therefore, get out of your comfort zone and enjoy Australia! You won't regret it!☺

