

The logo is a circular emblem with a dark background. At the top is a small crest featuring a shield with a book and a sun. Below the crest, the word "DEAKIN" is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Underneath "DEAKIN" is "UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA" in a smaller, all-caps sans-serif font. At the bottom of the circle, the word "Worldly" is written in a large, elegant, script font.

DEAKIN
UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA
Worldly

EXCHANGE REPORT

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2019 TRIMESTER 1

WATERFRONT CAMPUS

GEELONG 3220 VIC

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Introduction

My name is Mincho Petkov originally from Bulgaria and living for the last 7 years in Copenhagen, Denmark. I am studying *"Architecture technology and construction management"* at KEA and decided to take my 5th semester (March-May, Trimester 1) at Deakin University, Waterfront campus in Geelong, Australia. I had many reasons to choose Australia and this was the only choice for me as an exchange program. The main reason to chose Australia was because it's been a dream place to me since I was a kid and another thing is that Deakin is very popular and well-known University all over the world. I believe that part of my education and the knowledge gained here will play a significant role in my future experience, CV, and portfolio.

Steps to apply for Australia

The application to Australia takes some time therefore, it is advised to start preparing all documents straight away. You have to do that during the semester in KEA when you will have evaluations, assignments and probably exam at that time. The person who will guide and help you with the documents is Andreas Berger (International Coordinator). One of your first steps should be the scanning of your documents-yellow card, passport, ID, blue card EU (despite the fact you are applying to go to Australia, they require that document), motivational letter, English test (at least C1 level pass as the final score). You need to apply through KEA's platform and get nominated. Next step is to create an account in Deakin's website.

Steps to do when you are accepted

1. Log into your online application and change the status to "Committed".
2. Bupa Overseas Student Health Cover (BUPA), which is required by the University and the Department of Home Affairs. This insurance costs 303AUD or 1460DKK.
3. Fill the attached Offer Acceptance Form and Payment of Fees Form.
4. Proof of payment (payment receipt) and the Acceptance and Payment of Fees.
5. Beach welcome program (if you decide to apply). It is up to you to choose that option. This trip is part of your first days in Australia right before the beginning of the semester. It is a nice journey where you can meet other exchange students and spend 2 nights at Lorne (Great Ocean Road). For first time there, I saw a koala next to our sleeping area. You will be able to do a lot of activities-biking, hiking, surfing, playing volleyball, walking around local shops or maybe just enjoying the amazing beach view. The cost of the luxury is 120AUD, around 600DKK and it is definitely worth it.
6. Visa application-before booking the tickets it is strongly recommended to apply for student Visa. The application contains a lot of pages and it takes some time to fill it. The price is 583AUD, (2680DKK). When the application is submitted you will receive the VISA, in my case it took 3 days.
7. Your last step before arriving in Australia should be booking the tickets. I paid 4358DKK (Copenhagen-Doha-Melbourne).

Arrival to Australia

I arrived in Melbourne on 31st of January 2019. 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.

Mobile phone operator

I bought a Sim card Boost at Melbourne airport which cost me 8AUS (40DKK), including 35GB data for the first charge and unlimited calls and messages in Australia. I decided to keep using it because for the following months, the offer was 30AUS (150DKK) including 20GB data and 22GB extra (as a bonus) per month.

Accommodation

The orientation week for exchange students started on 20th of February-1st of March 2019. The beginning of T1 was on 4th of March. Therefore, it was recommended to arrive in advance. Geelong is a very peaceful and nice city 60km away from Melbourne and half an hour from some world-class surf beaches, like Torquay and Bells beach.

Some students decided to use the dorm provided by Deakin. The price to live in a dorm is almost 6000DKK per month. It is true that you have a really nice view to the water, and it is next to the University. For me that price was way high and in my opinion the environment was more suitable for students between 19 and 22 years old, so I decided to live on my own. At the beginning, I spent 5 nights at Airbnb (1227DKK), a place located into the central part of Geelong and 5-7 minutes away from the University.

Next day after my arrival I started to look for a place to live and founded 6 7 places near the other campus Waurin Ponds which is 9km away from Waterfront. The prices for a room were really cheap 2000-2500DKK per month, but that was not my best option. You should be aware that 9km it is not like in Denmark, people are not biking so often here. After my first day, I was surprised how easy is here to find a place to stay. On my second day of searching, I found another 5 options closer to Waterfront campus located at Belmont in Geelong. It is a really nice area with many bus connections and the most important thing is that Deakin's free bus stops there. I decided to go through all offers and choose the best option for me at the very last day in my AirBnB room. I was lucky to find the closest place to Waterfront and my future home on Gheringhap street, the same street where my campus is located. I shared a house with 2 more people, paying 165AUS per week or 3000DKK per month including internet and all utility bills. To find a place, I used <https://www.gumtree.com.au/> and <https://flatmates.com.au/>. You have to be aware that finding a place to stay (accommodation) in Australia is a hundred times easier compare to Denmark.



The house during my stay

Student card, transport card and bank account

Applying for your Deakin card is an easy and very quick process. All you need to do is to ask for it at the student desk at Waterfront. After I got my student card, I went to the central station in Geelong to get the transport card called Myki (works as rejsekort in Denmark). You have to fill in a form and show your Deakin student card at the central station to get Myki concession (50% discount).

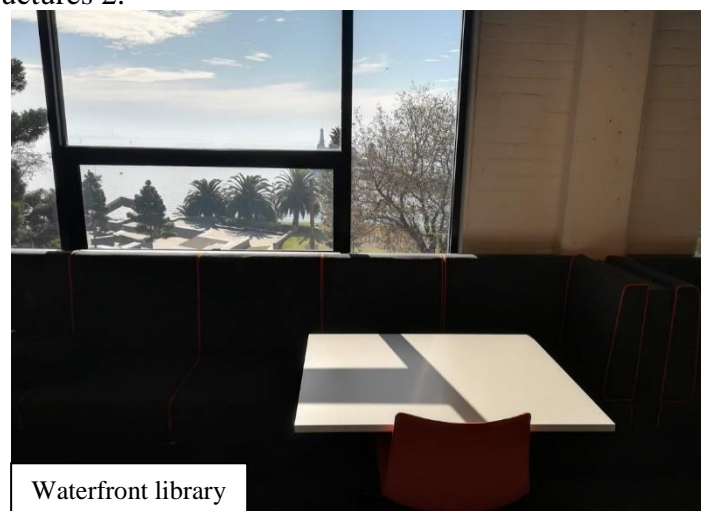
You can use your Danish visa or master card here as well and it is more than fine. The issue with the card is when you withdraw money, there will be a fee of 10% tax deducted on the amount you are going to receive. Another thing is, if you want to send or transfer money to your landlord for the rent, the tax will be around 200DKK. I decided to open a bank account in Commonwealth. To receive your bank card takes up to 5 working days. The other thing which could be beneficial is to use <https://transferwise.com/au> when you make transactions from your Danish to your Australian bank account.

Prices

Based on my experience, prices are almost the same as in Denmark. Remember it costs quite a lot to get ready for Australia (tickets, Visa, insurances, rent, etc). Your Fakta, Aldi or Netto in Australia is called Coles 😊, where you can find whatever you want for decent prices. You should try the kangaroo meat, barramundi, emu, vegemite (most of the people don't like it but I love it) and do not forget to try the amazing Tim-tam biscuits.

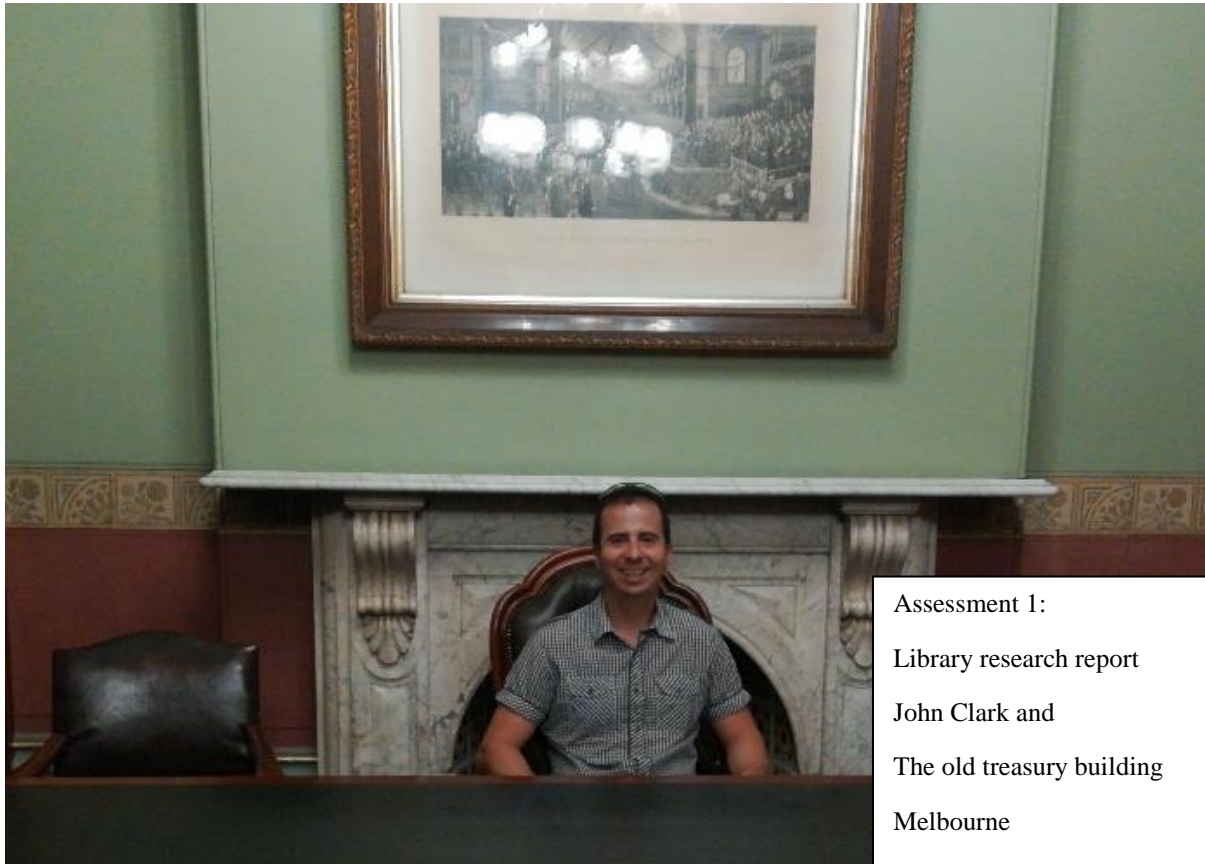
Units, lectures and seminars

You need to choose the courses while you are in Denmark. I did not change any of my units, because our international advisor Andreas recommend that. It is better to follow the regular units for that particular semester. On the other hand, I had two exchange students from Melbourne at KEA. They also shared some information and told me that the units which I am going to study are interesting and perfect for an exchange student like me. Some other exchange students in Australia change their units during the semester(trimester) and they struggle with it, till they find what is more relevant or interesting for them. The other issue is that you have to be aware of the semester in Australia, it is really short and intensive, only 3 months. My units were Utopian ideals in the modern world, Construction finance, Building safety, and Construction and structures 2.



SRA215 Utopian ideals in the modern world (with Ursula De Jong)

It was one of the most interesting and challenging units for me at Deakin Waterfront. Back in KEA, we are more focused on the technical part and software skills mostly in Revit. Based on our study, we should know more about the past and history. This unit gained my knowledge in revivalism, arts and craft movement, the revolution in the architecture, abstract expressionism and minimalism, brutalism and postmodernism. For me, this is the foundation of what we are doing now following the principles of the architects, engineers, designers, and painters back in time. In this unit, I had three assignments-library research report, oral presentation, and essay. Being part of this unit, you have the chance to learn and explore most of the historical places in Melbourne and not only.



Assessment 1:
Library research report
John Clark and
The old treasury building
Melbourne

SRE170 Construction finance (with Tim Sproat)

At first, I wasn't into Jakob's assignments in my previous semesters back in KEA but when I began to study this unit, I realized how useful and important are Jakob's business tasks and assignments. This unit introduces you some of the financial considerations that will drive the construction industry in the 21st century. You will learn fundamental accounting principles and practices to financial transactions on building works and in construction companies. In this unit, there are two assignments-one group research report and one individual report. Last we had the final written exam which contained open questions and calculation tasks.

SRT141 Building safety (with John Kite)

Building safety is about developing and maintaining a safety culture on building sites and examines Australian requirements and regulations. In this unit you will learn also about fire safety, life safety principles, including basic first aid, site safety and supervision of on-site operatives specifically with respect to site induction and compliance requirements. I would say that is an interesting unit and requires to submit two reports and one online quiz with multiple choice questions. In this unit, you need to take a white/construction induction card course which allows you to visit premises and it is mandatory. I was familiar with most of the subjects in this unit because of my experience from on site visits back in Denmark. The tricky part is that you have to follow the Australian rules. One of the most interesting things in this unit was one site visit next to the University, where I saw a completely different montage of a crane compare to Denmark. Sounds easy but do not underestimate this unit.



Site visit at Miramar
Geelong
3220 Victoria

SRT251 Construction and structures 2 (with Glen Costin and Glen Rodgers)

During this unit, I extended my knowledge of construction and structures principles. I learn more about the various structural solutions available to carry significant dead and loads and to span and cover wide areas, such as portal frames. I had online quizzes with multiple choices after each lecture and one group case study analysis report, where we investigated the construction concepts, process and structural requirements of commercial and industrial building construction, located on an existing site in Geelong. Later we made a group presentation and presented in front of the class. It was also required to submit an individual technology portfolio, which contains (weekly assignments) and they are usually done during the weekly seminars. Last we had the final written exam which contained multiple-choice and open questions.

Personal advice

In my opinion, it is better not to skip the lectures and the seminars (especially seminars). The tutors and domestic students will tell you that the lectures are recorded but be aware that there could be some unexpected technological setbacks. Sometimes the teachers also forget to record the lecture. It is really important to introduce yourself in the beginning to the tutors and let them know you are an exchange student and that you might need extra help or explanation. It is also very important to locate your timetable for your seminars. The lectures start at the same time for everyone, but the seminars are divided by groups (around 20 people), so you have to book your preferable time through Deakin's website.



Australian students are really open and friendly with a different approach as regard to the studying process. Most cases, they start working close to the deadline, so do not expect miracles when you have group assignment with ozzies. Try to start earlier your assignments and leave three to four days before the deadline to check your final work, maybe you can improve something. Wouldn't it be better to complete the task a few days ahead of schedule, rather start working right up to the last minute? The tutors here are very friendly and always willing to help. All of them are giving some tips few days before the submission of a particular assignment. It is valuable and one of the many reasons to participate the lectures and seminars.

Deakin has an extraordinary library working 24/7 with security guards around. People at the library are keen to help and answer your questions. You can book a private meeting as well with an adviser at the library (I did that once because of few different assignments containing Harvard and Oxford referencing style and I wanted to be sure how I am doing). Compare to KEA, back in Denmark in my opinion the education here it is easier. The tutors have clear answers to your questions and the guide through Deakin website for each assignment is more than understandable. In the beginning, I decided to spend all my weekdays to study and leave weekends for meeting friends, new people and explore part of Victoria. In that way, I was productive and managed to save money for my future trips. You have to spend time for your unit classes and assignments and believe me Deakin University consumes a lot of energy. In general, a high level of education and well organized. For me, all the units were more than interesting.

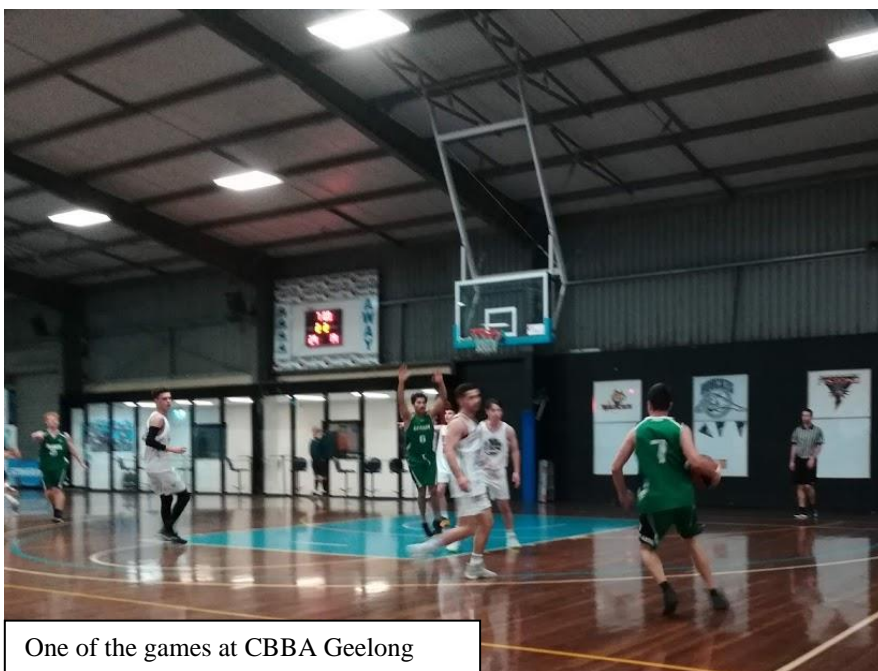
Social life

During the orientation week and beach welcome trip at Lorne, I met other exchange students and explored the Australian sightseeing. We also watched few Australian football games at GMHBA and Marvel stadiums. I recommend to visit at least one Ozzie footy match, Geelong Cats are the local team. The sport activity is really important for me and for that purpose I joined the University basketball team Deakin Dragons where we become friends with my team players.

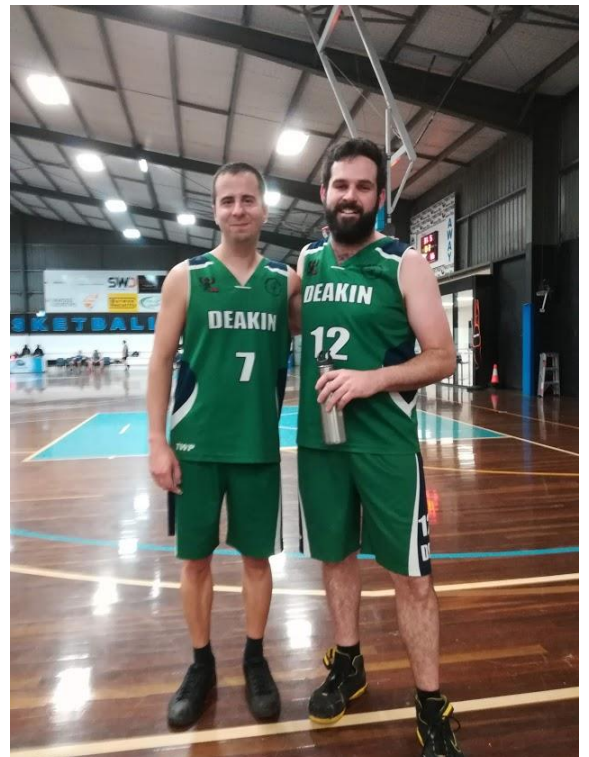
We were part of Corio men's basketball division and we played every Wednesday. This is one of the best places where you can meet Australian people. That was one of my aims during my journey here, to get to know more about the locals. In the end of the trimester, we also watched the NBA playoffs at the Sporting globe (popular bar) in Geelong. After my exams, I went to New Zealand, Tasmania, Sydney, and Singapore. Before you come to Australia it is a good idea to get an international driver license, because in Australia you have to wait for it, and it is more expensive.



Helicopter trip at 12 Apostles



One of the games at CBBA Geelong



Conclusion

As a conclusion, I would say that Australia definitely met my expectations. That was my dream destination and I am happy I made it come true. I gained a lot of experience, knowledge and most of all, I learned a lot about myself. Many people are saying that it is good to get out of your comfortable zone, in my opinion, it is all about your mind. You can be happy everywhere if you are a positive and hardworking person. Australia is a very special place and that is why there are not so many people who are able to see this part of the world and its nature. Try to enjoy and appreciate the time while you are here. I would like sincerely to thank Andreas, KEA and Deakin for giving me this opportunity. Good luck!



Narana-Aboriginal cultural centre



Kennett river



GMHBA stadium



Great ocean journey



Lorne beach