

BLOG 2: DRAMA DOWN UNDER!

If you read my initial blog, the plan was to study abroad at Virginia Tech in the USA. Well change of plan... I am currently studying at Curtin University in Perth, Western Australia as part of my degree. I guess I just thought if I'm going to do this, why not travel half way across the world! My decision to **study abroad** is honestly one of the best decisions I've made. I am without a doubt having an amazing time. This opportunity and **placement sandwich year** were some of the main reasons why I decided to go to Loughborough University.

So the flight here took 18 hours all together, plus a pit stop in Dubai for 3 hours. Getting a flight by myself was a little daunting. I had this kind elderly lady on the plane telling me how much I reminded her of her granddaughter and she even gave me her number – pulled! I thought I'd find a thousand problems with traveling to the other side of the world, I thought I'd be scared and that something was bound to go wrong, but fortunately, it didn't. Also, the stories about snakes and spiders being dotted about everywhere are not true! The only snakes and spiders I have seen have been at the petting zoo on campus, or at the wildlife park. Speaking of the wildlife park... It was amazing; we fed kangaroos, held snakes and got our photograph taken with koalas and wombats!



There are loads of different trips here. This month, I'm booking a trip to Bali with the friends I've made here. So far we've planned on going to the elephant safari park, all the lovely beaches, surfing and going on a hike! In September I'm planning to explore North Western Australia, with others at Curtin! We will be feeding wild dolphins, swimming with whale sharks at Shark Bay, a glass bottom boat and snorkelling tour and visiting the Nigaloo Reef. I couldn't be more excited. Then before I come home at Christmas time, I hope to visit Melbourne and Sydney and I am desperate to see the Great Barrier Reef!



Aside from the sightseeing, even my accommodation here looks like a holiday home; I'm walking around thinking about how different it all looks. My friends almost always laugh at my fascination with the trees here, they're so tall and there are palm trees! Perth itself is amazing, after only being here two weeks I have already visited Fremantle, Scarborough Beach, City Beach, Hilary Boat Harbour, Kings Park, and next weekend we're heading to Rottnest Island on a ferry.



PATHWAYS

Curtin arranges frequent barbecues and there's been some unusual foods on offer. My village made a Kangaroo curry for our welcome meal and they even serve shark on chips. I've still not tried it but must say I'm intrigued! There's also loads of random really cool aesthetics here such as paintings, random bean bags, hammocks and they even have sleeping pods in the library!

I've made lots of new friends here, the Australians are really friendly! I've also met British exchange students, from Reading, Tarleton and Edinburgh. People refer to us as "The British girls" as we seem to do everything together. Don't get me wrong though I've also met a lot of other people from different countries and it's so interesting to find out how our cultures differ. I've met an American who doesn't know what a crumpet is! There are also weird Australian phrases, like 'fair dinkum' which means 'fair enough', or 'she'll be right' instead of saying 'it's going to be alright'. Or my personal fav, thongs are flip flops not underwear. I was a bit held back when my lecturer told me that I'm not allowed to wear thongs in the TV studio. You know what else is funny? Its winter here, and they think its freezing, I feel like wearing a bathing suit to my lectures the sun is that warm!



Ok so you probably want to know what the student life is like here, I'm currently doing Screen Arts and Theatre. The modules/units I've chosen are actually really enjoyable, I'm doing Experimental Screens, Technical Theatre Fundamentals, Collaborative Theatre and Screen Practices. They include making films, writing scripts and being trained in production side of theatre, with lighting, sound, stage management and costume. I am studying Shakespearean and Greek theatre which I find really interesting. I also get to watch and analyse films, which is pretty cool! There's also a lot of clubs available here, although not as many as Loughborough offers I must admit. I have joined cheerleading, photography club, and literacy volunteering for children.

I am aware I could easily get distracted by all the cool and new things to do here, so I'm trying my best to stay on top of things and all the lecturers here are really helpful and supportive – plus I kind of love my modules so it widens my attention span! The lifestyle in Oz is also very different, they get up early and go to bed early and some of the shops close at 6pm (no midnight snacks unfortunately), and a lot of the clubs close at 12pm. At first I thought they were crazy, as back home we usually leave at that time, but now I kind of like it. The nights out tend to be on a Wednesday or a Saturday, and an early night on a Wednesday means I'm not a tragedy walking into my 8am lecture on a Thursday! My timetable is Monday to Thursday – so I basically have a long weekend, additional to having short working days which allows me a lot of time to both keep up with my studies and explore Australia.



PATHWAYS

I honestly couldn't be more amazed by this opportunity Loughborough has given me! Just think you're more likely to regret something you never did, rather than something you went for that didn't work out. Loughborough offers options to study abroad for a semester in your second year (which I'm doing) and if you choose a four year degree then you also have the option to either have a work placement or to study abroad for the whole year. My friend Grace is doing this and I can't explain how jealous I am, might not come home (sorry mum)...

Anyway I best get to my lecture! Hope all you prospective students achieved the exam results you wanted, get yourselves to Loughborough!

