

**Name: Maika Sakamoto (Koyo High school)**

**Title: The Trip, Which Changed Me a Lot**

This summer vacation was awesome! I had a great opportunity to go to Australia.

My trip to Australia was the best so far. I went through many things that I couldn't experience on any other trip.

First, I went to Australia with students from other high schools. We didn't know each other at all, but having several meetings and having group study sessions made us closer. We became not only study tour members, but friends as well.

Second, I studied at three high schools in Australia. We visited a public school and two private schools. All of them were very different from schools in Japan. Many students used computers in school. Their textbooks are in the computer, so they don't have to carry heavy books. The thing that surprised me the most was that there were many students of various ethnic backgrounds. I heard many languages outside the classrooms. In addition, all of the schools I went to had Japanese classes.

Third, I experienced a three-day homestay. I stayed in Jamberoo, a place with beautiful nature. The day began by enjoying barbeque in the morning with my host mother's neighbors. Then, we walked along the seashore. I saw whales for the first time. There was an amazing view and we could see the horizon spreading across our entire field of vision. My host mother took me to many interesting places and helped me have a valuable experience.

Finally, I made a speech at Sydney City Hall. Before giving the speech, many teachers helped me practice it. That morning I was very nervous at first, but when I entered the city hall, many people talked to me and I had no time to feel stressed. Everyone listened to my speech earnestly, and I was able to speak with composure. It was one of the most precious experiences in my life.

The study tour changed me very much. People live different lives in different places while I live my life in Japan. I realized that range of my knowledge was very limited. I believe my way of thinking has become different from before. I will make use of this experience and all of its lessons for the rest of my life.

**Name: Yui Ito (Koyo High School)**

**Title: My Wonderful Memory in Australia**

Thanks to this study tour, I was able to experience many things such as taking lessons at school in Sydney, riding a horse in Jamberoo, seeing Opera House and Harbor Bridge. Among them, my school life at Cherrybrook Technology High School and homestay in Jamberoo left a strong impression on me.

At Cherrybrook Technology High School, many students greeted me in Japanese “konnichiwa!” I was nervous at first, but this made me happy and I also said “Hi!” to many students and teachers. Of course I talked a lot with my buddy, Helen. I’m not sure that my English was always correct, but Helen listened to me carefully. Her friends also talked to me cheerfully and asked me many questions about my family, my favorite subject and sport, Japanese anime, and so on. When I joined classes with my buddy, I was surprised at the way students participated. Students raised their hands many times to ask questions or express their own opinion, even while a teacher is speaking. I was impressed how Australian students actively spoke during classes without being afraid of making mistakes. They taught me that not saying anything was a shame rather than making mistakes. I thought Japanese students should follow Australian practice.

In Jamberoo, there are many beautiful places to see. When I walked about six kilometers on the mountain path by the sea, I was a little tired. However, the wonderful scenery of the blue sea and the green mountain always encouraged me, so I enjoyed walking and taking beautiful pictures. During my homestay, riding a horse is my best memory. I could see a beautiful view while riding a horse. It was a precious experience that I could never expect in Japan.

Besides these experiences, I went to St. Aloysius’ College and Wenona High School. Every student talked to me friendly, so I was glad to make a lot of friends. I also went sightseeing in Sydney-Opera House, Royal Botanic Gardens, Taronga Zoo, and so on.

This study tour was my first time to go abroad, so I was anxious about having communication in English. However, I was supported by many people and I was able to spend a wonderful time filled with amazement and discovery. I was really fortunate to have participated in this program. I’m grateful to many people for warm support and effort in making our stay a most pleasant one.