



2023.11.25-01 Sydney

The flight to Sydney passed in the blink of an eye, literally in seconds. We had an extremely good view out of the window, so we were able to see the beauty of Australia from above. It was a great time to get a first impressions of all the exchange students. Because of my late arrival here in Australia, I have just seen a couple of them before the trip. When you get in touch with people about the Rotary Youth Exchange, they are all very positive about it and a lot of them have been in contact with Rotary or were an Exchange student themselves. What a great organisation. 😊



As we landed our chaperons Lois van Baalen, Shani Kaitani and Mitch Whalen led us to the bus, which then drove us 20 exchange students to the hotel. Our accommodation was perfect, situated near a park with just a 5-minute walk to the nearest train station and 2 minutes to the closest bus stop. The location was ideal.

Surprisingly most of the students are from Europe and just a couple from South America. In Germany more than 50% are from South America.

For the next week in Sydney we had a strict and good Program.

We all spent the day of arrival together at a small dinner in Chinatown and then went quite quick to bed.

On the next Morning we started with a visit to the Chinese Friendship Garden, which impressed me with its beauty of nature in the middle of such a big city. We then walked to the harbor and took the ferry to the Harbor Bridge and the Opera House for the first time. A magnificent sight. The iconic view one imagines of Sydney. Since we couldn't get enough of this view, we often took the ferry past the middle point of the city over the next few days. In the afternoon we were allowed to explore



the city centre and the market on our own. I

really liked the atmosphere on the market. Lots of great artists and inventors everywhere in the middle of a metropolis. For us

inbounds, that meant keeping an eye out for lots of new pins for our jackets. In the

evening the whole group went on a ship

and we enjoyed dinner with a harbor tour and an artistic show.



On Monday morning we climbed onto the harbor bridge as a whole group. This was a big highlight for me as a building enthusiast. The view from the highest point at 134 meters was breathtaking. It is so impressive what the engineers, architects and construction workers have created within six years. Climbing the bridge is an absolute recommendation and you should definitely do it if you are in Sydney. Unfortunately we were not allowed to bring out cameras with us. To relax, we went to the very touristy Bondi Beach in the afternoon and enjoyed the high waves.





Because we were still so exhausted from a busy Monday, we went to my favourite Manly Beach and played a very intense game of football there. Italy, Brazil, France and Belgium against a very strong team from Denmark, Austria, Sweden and Germany, which clearly won against the better placed



team in the world rankings thanks to its good team structure. After the sand battle we went for a tour of the opera house. The history of the opera house is very interesting and the conflicts with the Danish architect Jørn Utzon are very difficult to understand. Still a unique and fascinating building.



On Wednesday we took our train to the Blue Mountains at 7:30 a.m. to catch up on the sleep we had missed over the last few days. In the Scenic World, a kind of leisure park in nature, we were



able to experience history and breathtaking nature. On a short hike with fewer other inbounds we could experience the beautiful nature up close. A sensational experience that reminded you a lot of Jurassic Park, unfortunately without dinosaurs.



We spent the last full day in Sydney shopping for souvenirs and spending time together in small groups before we went to lunch in the Sydney Tower, the tallest building at 309 meters. We had views from the sea to the beginnings of the Blue Mountains. The whole restaurant is constantly spinning in circles while you eat. A very successful and great conclusion. In the end everyone was happy with some last-minute shopping at Paddy's Markets.



And then we went home to beautiful WA again with more or less problems in the safety check but in a good mood.

A great trip and I'm looking forward to showing my family in Germany this beautiful city.

