

Lillie Berger – Semester in Australia

I was very excited when I first arrived in Australia. I could not believe I was actually there! The sites were amazing. There were tropical trees and birds everywhere. It was a nice change in pace from the wildlife I'm used to in Indiana. I was also very tired and ready to go to get settled in my room. We eventually arrived on campus. There I was checked in to my room. It was very exciting to finally see where I would be living for the next 4 ½ months. My room was very nice, it had a large closet, very nice sized desk, fairly comfortable bed, and a balcony. The view from my room was gorgeous. I could see the mountains behind the campus. The first day went well.

I did suffer from jet lag for a few days. I would go to bed crazy early and wake up before the sun rose. One morning I woke up at 4 am! The first week I was here was full of activities. We had O-week, their beginning of the year orientation. We attended small lecture to orient us to the university. At the end of O-week, the student association took us on a trip to Billabong Sanctuary. The trip was amazing. I was able to actually hold a koala and get a picture with it. I also held a snake, an estuarine crocodile and got a picture with a wombat. They had a sort of a petting-zoo enclosure that contained wallabies. It was super neat to be able to take a selfie with a wallaby. They were really soft too!



The next week, classes began. My classes are very interesting and fairly hands on. I feel like I am going to get an amazing marine biology education while I am here. Taking these classes also made me appreciate the education I have received with Purdue FNR thus far.



Purdue FNR is so hands on and teaches us a wide variety of things. I have noticed that many of the things I am doing in my classes here at James Cook are similar to things I have learned or done at Purdue. I can easily transfer over my knowledge and skills from Purdue to my classes here. I do not feel behind in anyway to the students who have been in the program since the beginning.

I had three field trips associated with my classes throughout the semester. I got the opportunity to collect plankton samples out of the harbor, visit an

aquarium to practice study techniques with animals in captivity, and collect life history data on a coral species at Orpheus Island Research Station. The field experience was amazing! I am grateful to have such a hands-on experience with collecting data in multiple different ways. We also analyzed the data we collected and wrote up papers regarding what we collected.

My experience in Australia was not just classes and fun field trips! I was able to take a couple trips with friends I had made to some really neat spots around Queensland. My friends and I took a road trip to Cairns where we visited the Daintree Rainforest, experience the city life, and made stops at various waterfalls along the way. I made so many memories and great friends during my experience abroad!

Even though I enjoyed my experience, I was very excited to come home when the time came. The trip back home was long and tiring, but it was so nice to see all my friends and family again. The adjustment back was not too difficult, although I was very jet-lagged for a few days. If I had the chance, I would definitely go back to Australia and would love to travel more elsewhere in the world. I would highly recommend this experience to anyone who is interested!

