

## Master's Internship at the Telethon Kids Institute in Perth, Australia



During my Master's, I had the opportunity to complete my studies with an internship at the Telethon Kids Institute in Perth, Australia. There, I was working in the small research group of Joost Lesterhuis on improving immunotherapy for sarcoma patients using a biomaterial-based approach. This means, I was trying to load an immune stimulant in a small hydrogel and

investigating whether the immune response improved by delivering the drugs with a hydrogel. In this internship I was able to further improve already learned techniques, but also expanding my skill set. Although, I had to cut my stay in Australia short due to the pandemic, I was able to perform data analysis from home to finish my thesis. At home, I started learning programming under the supervision of a Post Doc from the lab to analyze data, which helped to overcome the time in the lockdown.

When I first arrived in Perth, I immediately joined the annual meeting of the Cancer Centre of the Telethon Kids Institute. This gave me the chance to meet everyone from the lab and department on my very first day in a more informal setting. My lab was just with three people by the time I joined, so it was quite easy to get to know them. Since it was such a small lab, I was working closely with a PhD student and Post Doc side-by-side, who taught me a lot. As I joined the lab in December, the Christmas break was just a few weeks later and gave me the time to slowly start setting up in the lab as well as some time to experience Perth.

Besides working in the lab on my internship, I spend a lot of time traveling through Australia. Just before I went to Perth, I was visiting the East coast. We traveled from Sydney to Cairns visiting Melbourne and Fraser Island, hiking in the Blue Mountains, snorkeling at the Whitsundays, diving in the Great Barrier Reef and watching the Penguin Parade on Phillip Island. Once I arrived in Perth, there was even more to explore. Next to the many beaches in Perth, I also visited Rottnest Island. The home of the cutest animal ever, the quokka, which are tiny and always smiling kangaroos.

Overall, I had an amazing experience in Australia. I learned a lot during my internship and especially through working closely alongside more experience scientists. However, I was also able to see a lot of Australia enjoying every minute I was there. I want to thank the Nora Baart Foundation for making this unforgettable trip possible.

