

My experience in Sydney

I've always wanted to go abroad during my master and Australia was at the top of my list, so I was really excited when I had the opportunity to do a research internship at the ithree Institute, at the University of Technology Sydney. I was part of the Harry lab, where I investigated bacterial morphology, especially filamentation, in response to antibiotics. Filamentation is a survival mechanism that is associated to enhanced antibiotic resistance and pathogenic advantages, so my aim was to elucidate the characteristics of filaments and examine their susceptibility to antibiotics and phagocytosis. In this project I could combine many different techniques and I got to work with some fancy microscopes, as there was a great microbial imaging facility. The labs were comparable to those at my home university, except that it was my first time working in a PC-2 lab, but it was still a different experience to work abroad. I was in a small, very close research group, which made that the working environment was very pleasant. Everyone was invested in the project and always willing to give helpful suggestions, but I was also given a lot of responsibility in the progress of the project and was stimulated to independently set up new experiments.



Besides my work at the lab, I also just really enjoyed living in Sydney. In my free time, I was busy exploring everything there is to see and do in and around Sydney, from whale watching on the ocean to hiking in the Blue Mountains. Since Australia is a very popular destination for students and backpackers, it was not difficult to find new friends to share these adventures with. I also spent my Christmas break road tripping in beautiful Tasmania. After I was done in the lab, I travelled to other hotspots like Melbourne, the Great Ocean Road and Byron Bay, where I did other fun things like surfing at sunrise and kayaking amidst dozens of dolphins. My plan was to travel all the way up on the East Coast, but unfortunately I had to cut my trip short due to the Covid-19 pandemic. So now I have a good excuse to return another time to this beautiful country!

Overall, I had fantastic time in Australia and made great memories. Spending a part of my master's program abroad was an amazing experience, both professionally and personally, and I would recommend it to anyone! Therefore, I want to thank the Nora Baart Foundation sincerely for their support.

