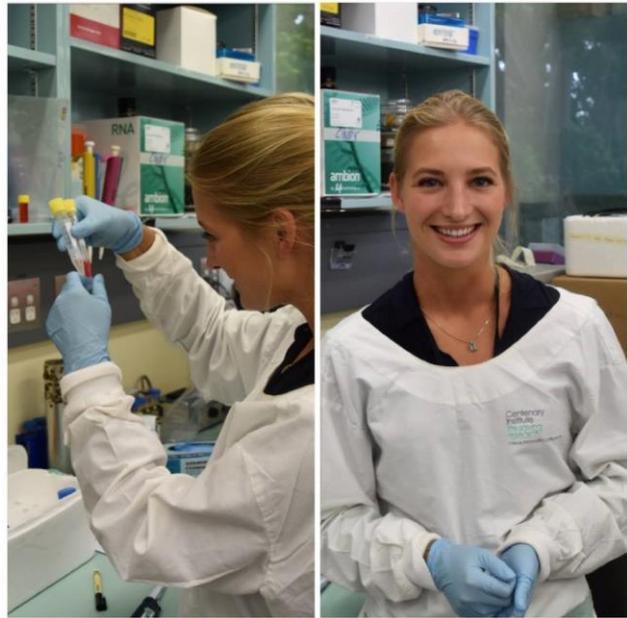


Sydney, 16-06-2016

In September 2015 I started my second research internship as a part of my master Infection and Immunity at the University of Utrecht. Unlike the first research project, which was in Utrecht, this one was going to take place in Sydney, Australia, at the Centenary Institute for Medical Research. My project was on the use of regulatory T cells to prevent graft-versus-host disease and took place in the T cell lab under supervision of Professor Barbara Fazekas de St. Groth. My first impression of the lab was one of mixed feelings. Compared to the UMC research facilities, things seemed a bit messy and unorganized here. In the first week of my internship, the post-doc that was to be my daily supervisor was unexpectedly admitted



into hospital, and though she is fine now, she wasn't released until the last month of my research! So obviously I needed a different mentor, and Barbara took it upon herself to teach me everything I needed to know. This involved a senior lab head going back into the lab for the first time in many years, so it led to some rather funny situations from time to time. Though messy, the T cell lab produces excellent quality research involving mouse work with carefully bred strains. All the breeding and genotyping is done in-house, so naturally some of these tasks were put onto me. This being the first time I did any animal work, it took some getting used to, but I quickly became familiar with the necessary techniques.

After a bit of a rough start, I came to love Australia, Sydney, and the Centenary Institute. Being an independent research institute, the Centenary is quite differently structured than a hospital based research centre. A lot of continuous effort by a marketing team is constantly put into gaining funding for the institute. The many different labs are all independent entities but there is a familiar atmosphere leading to fruitful collaborations within the institute. As for myself, the project was coming along quite nicely so I decided to put in an abstract for the International Congress of Immunology, which was to be held in Melbourne in August 2016. My Abstract was accepted for a presentation, meaning that I am staying for here a bit longer, which isn't bad at all!

I want to thank the NBS for funding my travel costs to Australia and thereby contributing to this wonderful experience.

Aster Pijning