



**GOLD MEDALLIST 2017
“DKLS LINGUISTIC AMBASSADOR AWARD”**

**REPORT ON STUDY TOUR TO
AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY
13 – 19 APRIL 2018**



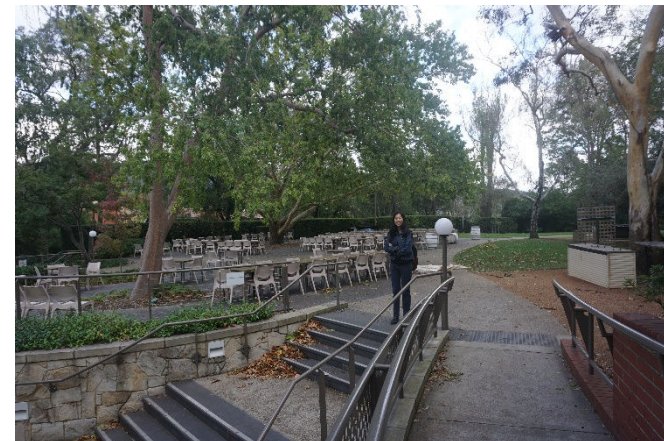
Saturday, 14 April 2018

Our journey from KL to Sydney began on a late Friday night and through to Saturday morning. It was quite exhausting but a few things made the trip more enjoyable – the friendly service of the wonderful airline crew, and also the delightful in-flight entertainment. Throughout the 8-hour flight, I filled my time watching a few movies and television shows. Finally, on Saturday morning, we touched down in Sydney International Airport! The first thing that caught my attention was how professional and strict the Australian Border Force were. They were committed to ensure all passengers must declare all incoming food item upon arrival.

As soon as we cleared immigrations, we boarded the Murray bus heading to Canberra, giving us another 3 hours to catch up on our sleep. From the view along the way, we can see the beautiful urban cityscape of Sydney slowly give way to wide plains sparsely dotted with cattle and trees. Next thing we knew we were at Australia's capital, the city of Canberra.

Upon exiting the bus terminal, we walked all the way to our home for the next few nights, University House Hotel on the ANU campus. That walk was not the smoothest one due to the strong, howling winds blowing against our direction. The first impression as we walked in Canberra was the city is really deserted during the weekends. I found it peaceful to walk down a street and with only an occasional car passing by.

The University House Hotel is located at the corner of Australian National University (ANU), convenient for guest who are visiting the campus for a short period of time. From the room's balcony we could see wonderful sight – a variety of interesting bird species among the trees within the courtyard of the hotel. Back home here in Malaysia, we don't see many different types of colourful birds. We were hungry for grub, and fortunately for us, the hotel is also a short walk away from several places to eat, one of them was a movie theatre with a built-in restaurant called Palace Electric Cinema, which was where we had our dinner - pasta and coffee. In the same area we passed by National Film and Sound Archive, the Shine Dome, and few of the buildings that are a part of ANU.



Sunday, 15 April 2018

Good morning, Canberra! Today, we are visiting the city centre for some sight-seeing and shopping. We now already have a rough feel of getting around the area, so we decided to head to the city by public transportation. On our way to a bus stop, we were delighted to be greeted by ... more birds! There were even more variety of birds including ducks, all adding life to the parks within ANU. A place that would forever stay in my memory was a bridge crossing Sullivan's Creek which is a great spot to watch the animals in the park and capture photos.

Speaking of birds, our first stop for the day was to get a bird's eye view of the city. We headed for Telstra tower, located on the top of Black Mountain offering panoramic views of Canberra. Before taking the elevator up, we were able to study the tower's history at the mini theatre and museum at the ground floor. Visitors can walk around the indoor and outdoor observation deck and grab snacks and souvenirs at the indoor facilities. After we left Telstra tower, we were fortunate enough to hitch a ride from a kind family going down the mountain, stopping at the National Botanic Gardens.

From there we walked to the nearest bus stop, taking two buses that eventually brought us to the Old Depot Market, a place filled with stores every Sunday. Finally, we've found of a place in Canberra that's bustling with human activity! You can find anything from large paintings to jewellery made out of utensils to clothes made for babies to sweaters for the chilly weather to pictures frames that come in all sorts of shapes and sizes. Next to the market is another hall just for selling food, perfect for anyone craving for delicacies from New York, Mexico, Thailand or even a glass of freshly squeezed orange juice. The atmosphere is made livelier thanks to the musician busking popular hits in the corner. At the other side of the hall there are more stalls selling popcorn, nuts and indoor plants.

After having a beef burger and popcorn, we walked around outside the market, visiting a glass workshop that showed how glass artwork is produced. After getting a good look around the area which was filled with families having a good time on a Sunday, we took a quick city bus tour going further around the city. We finally stopped outside the Albert Hall across the Molonglo River. We walked on foot once more around the Commonwealth Avenue, passing the Captain Cook Memorial, Jet and Blundells Cottage, finally stopping outside the National Workers Memorial and National Police Memorial to see the National Carillon located on the Aspen Island. Although the walk may look far and seemed tiring, we were still energised at the end of it much due to the cool weather and seeing dozens of people jogging, strolling and even walking their dogs around the river from one bridge to another.

We took another weekend bus that goes around hourly back to the central bus city where more stores and restaurants were. We had a Turkish Kebab for dinner and went shopping at Cole's inside the Canberra City. However most of the retail shops were closed as leisure shopping usually ends at 4pm. However, most restaurants stay would still offer dinner until 11pm.



Monday, 16 April 2018

It's Monday, and our official portion tour kicks off with breakfast at University House café, called The Fellows, with Ir Sam Tuck Wah and his wife. The Fellows will always be remembered as a place that has wide spread of healthy and scrumptious breakfast, ready to energise their guests. After breakfast, we were greeted by Ms Alice Grainger, who was extremely welcoming and friendly since the first moment we met. Ms Grainger introduced us to one of the student ambassador, the vivacious Montana Coombes, who later gave us a splendid and informative tour of the campus.



From left: Ms Alice Grainger (ANU International Project Coordinator), Mdm Ding Soo King (Board Representative, DKLS Foundation), Ir Sam Tuck Wah (Chairman Executive Committee, DKLS Foundation), Alyssa Yoong (DKLS Linguistic Ambassador Gold Medallist 2017), Montana Coombes (ANU Student Ambassador) and Mdm Chang Wai Yin (Alyssa's Mother)



John Curtin School of Medical Research



In the cafeteria of one of the residential colleges

What an impressive place Australian National University (ANU) is. We learned that ANU is a national research university offering both undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The campus located at suburb of Acton is huge and filled with buildings some are modern and some are historical. Although travelling from one point to another in the campus requires quite a distance of walking, we never felt tired instead was fascinated by the unique architecture of each building. At every turn in our walk through the campus, there are numerous parks that connect the buildings, creating a calm and conducive studying environment.

ANU also offers a place to stay for first-year undergraduate students. Students have the option to choose from eight different residential colleges on campus. Montana brought us inside few of these residential colleges, giving us a rare peek into the lives of students in the dormitories. Although each of the residential colleges differ from one another, most of them aim to help students connect with other students around them and have the most enjoyable campus life. They can hang out at the cafeteria or socialise in the games room. They can practise their music in band rooms or concentrate on their studies in the computer rooms. They can conduct talks about topics outside of the classroom or even have parties to celebrate just about anything in the dining rooms and even have barbeque. Montana shared that the residential colleges are very competitive between each other, especially when it comes to sports. On the other hand, whenever there's a concert or any events in one of the residential colleges, students all over campus are welcomed to join.



Students can relax and social here by watching TV, playing games or even hang around



Students in each floor can come together and select a theme to decorate the entire floor, in this instance, High School Musical was chosen.

Few of the residential colleges that we had the chance to look around were Burgmann College, Ursula College, Burton & Garran and the new Bruce Hall.



Burton & Garran has more international students and is a place that celebrates the diverse culture all around the world



A unique feature of Burton & Garran is the large kitchen where each student is allocated to a specific section, along with their own kitchen counter, kitchen cabinet, fridge and freezer space. In between the two rows of kitchen counters are tables where students can share meals and even recipes.

After touring the residential colleges, Montana brought us to where the science buildings were. Many students love walking past this area as it has a path that is surrounded by rows of trees, making this a stark contrast to their time in classes indoors. In the centre of the area, you can see a huge steel sphere created by some of the students. If anyone peeks into one of the holes, they can see a replica of the night sky filled with stars.



Looking through the hundreds of tiny light-specks reflected on the inner sphere looks like stars.

Montana also brought us to the School of Archaeology and Anthropology which has a mini museum at the ground floor. ANU has over the years collected many artefacts and ancient pieces here for students to study or observe. ANU also arranges many study trips all around the year that aims to aid students in their learning and research. Montana shares that she will have the opportunity to study in Yale soon through the exchange programme and visit Vietnam.



Museum in ANU School of Archaeology and Anthropology

After the tour, we had lunch at ANU Pop-Up Village, a central place where all kinds of eateries can be found. We all know that university student eat a lot, so this place is obviously a very popular hangout place. As we came in an unfortunate timing where a lot of renovation works were going on, the central building is under construction and most of the eating places are located in a smaller outdoor area. Yet we enjoyed our lunch as the food was incredibly delicious and the weather was perfect. Montana said that once the renovations are complete, there will be more residential colleges, much improved facilities and more retail shops opened for the convenience of the students.



ANU Pop-Up Village, place where students can enjoy their lunch in between classes

After lunch, we were greeted again by Ms Alice Grainger, who brought us to ANU School of History to meet with Professor Nicholas Brown, Head of School. Before the meeting, Ms Grainger gave us a quick tour around the building which has a complex structure. One has to fully understand the building plan to know where they want to head to. Based on the brief meeting with Professor Brown, he struck me as a wise man with a touching background story. He said that to learn about history is to understand it on a personal level, sharing that he kept a treasured item that belonged to his late father who went into war in Papua New Guinea and returned changed. He also explained in detail what ANU teaches in history in the two semesters and what were the popular courses.



Meeting with Professor Nicholas Brown, Head of School, ANU School of History

Tuesday, 17 April 2018

After the meeting, we made a courtesy visit to the High Commissioner of Malaysia, who was kind enough to spare her time out of busy schedule. Her Excellency is very approachable. Among the topic of discussion was about the essay competition, DKLS and further collaborations between ANU and Malaysia. We were joined by Mr Anthony Nelligan from ANU and the chat with High Commissioner was insightful.



Courtesy Call to the High Commissioner of Malaysia in Canberra

From left : Mdm Chang Wai Yin (Alyssa's Mother), Dr Anthony Nelligan (Manager of Regional Partnerships Development, ANU), H.E Dato' Sudha Devi K R Vasudeva, Ir Sam Tuck Wah (Chairman Executive Committee, DKLS Foundation), Mdm Ding Soo King (Board Representative, DKLS Foundation) and Alyssa Yoong (DKLS Linguistic Ambassador Gold Medallist 2017).

After bidding farewell to Ir Sam Tuck Wah and wife, I joined Montana Coombes in attending her class about Aboriginal Australians. I guess you can say this is an opportunity to blend in anonymously and post as an ANU student for a few hours. Montana explained that usually some subjects are separated into a few modules. For this particular subject, she has lectures first, which do not require all students to be present as some are working at that particular time, the students may watch the recorded lectures later. This is followed by a tutorial which is held in smaller groups and attendance is compulsory. In the lecture, the professor was teaching about policies that were imposed in the past by the government regarding welfare of the indigenous people. In the tutorial, students held discussions based on the article that were assigned to study on. The students had more chances to interact with the lecturer in the tutorial and are encouraged to give opinions.



Alyssa and Montana in lecture hall

After lunch, we met up with Ms Alice Grainger once again and she led us to the Research School of Psychology. This time we were introduced to Professor Michael Platow, Associate Director, who gladly shared about what ANU has to offer in Psychology and gave us a tour around the Research of Psychology. He explained what students will learn in psychology and the different branches of the field. When showing us around the building, he shared what research were going on and the various methods of carrying out experiments.



Meeting with Professor Michael Platow (Associate Director ANU Research School of Psychology)



One of the experiment rooms that studies the thoughts of the subject.

We were then greeted by Holly, another student ambassador. She guided us to tour around the College of Science. Currently she is doing her postgraduate studies about the mangrove trees. She brought us into the various buildings that focuses on different branches of science and showed us the laboratories and libraries around these colleges. One of the highlights of that particular tour was visiting the Wood Library where thousands of block wood samples used for identifying species of tree. It was quite a breathtaking sight to behold the many species that are rare, and some of which are already extinct. Also, I expect this place would have a good sprinkler system.



Wood Library in the Frank Fenner Building

The tour concluded at Science Central where we were given a briefing of the steps required to study in ANU and what are courses available. The brief meeting was extremely helpful.



Holly giving a tour around the college of science and the picture was taken from Research School of Biology

Soon afterwards, Ms Alice Grainger drove us to Questacon where my mom and I had the chance to explore science in a fun and exciting way.



Questacon is a place where everyone can learn science through what was happening in our everyday lives.

Wednesday, 18 April 2018

Our last day in ANU! Today, Ms Grainger was unavailable so her colleague, Sarah brought us to ANU Student Central Building. We met with Mr Gorakh Deshmukh from ANU International Student Recruitment team who was in charge of overseeing the South East Asia region. We were also joined by 4 Malaysians currently studying in ANU and we had a wonderful chat in a coffeehouse nearby. They shared what it is like to study in Australia and what are the ups and downs of doing so. They had a chance to gain knowledge from one of the most prestigious university in the world and meet with undergraduates of different nationality. However they missed Malaysian food as the few restaurants that offer authentic Malaysian food fused into local favours.



From left : ANU undergraduates Azreen, Margarita, Alyssa Yoong, Zayana, Austin from Malaysian Association Chapter Australia (MASCA) and Malaysian Student Organisation (MSO) and on the most right is Mr Gorakh Deshmukh (Regional Manager, South East Asia, International Student Recruitment)



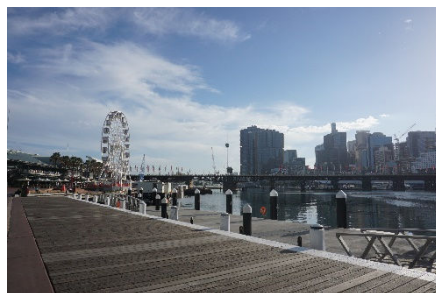
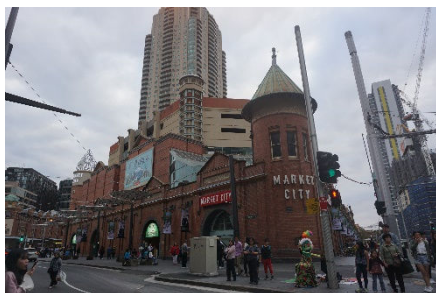
(Sydney)

From Canberra we took the Murrays bus once again heading back to Sydney. Coming from a place there more birds than humans, it took some time to get used to seeing congested streets and traffic jams. The moment we got off the bus we walked to our hotel and checked in immediately. It was a race against time as we want to maximise the shopping hours before 6pm. We headed straight to Paddy's Market soon after we settled in, getting souvenirs for our Malaysian family and friends. As where we were staying was pretty near to Sydney's Chinatown, we were taken aback to see more Asian locals around the mall compared to Caucasians. It is a great relief to see Australia welcomes and celebrates diversity by opening doors to migrants to do business in the bustling Australian city.

Once we completed our shopping, we had met up with my mom's schoolmates with their husbands tagging along. They brought their husbands and everyone had a lovely reunion dinner at Macchiato Wood Fire Pizza & Coffee Roastery.

Thursday, 19 April 2018

As we have to be at the airport early, we set off to Darling Harbour on foot to not miss the opportunity of seeing the iconic attraction. On our way there we passed by a few places such as the Chinese Garden of Friendship, Powerhouse Museum and ICC Sydney Theatre. After we finished our sight-seeing we took an airport bus to Sydney Airport and boarded a plane back home.



Reflection

Our time in Sydney and Canberra went by really quickly. All the events and experiences are priceless and memorable. Canberra is definitely an ideal place to study as it is the capital city and very different compared to Sydney. Surrounded by serene lakes and beautiful architectural landmarks, the nearest park could be just only a few steps away. Dozen species of birds and even kangaroo can be found in the campus itself. There are also a lot of rabbits but strangely are considered pests by the locals.

ANU celebrates diversity and continuously encourages students to seek knowledge. They being a research university never stop driving themselves to be the best and that is one of the remarkable attractions of studying there. My only hope as I've left Australia and return to my homeland is that there will be more cooperation between these two nations and more Malaysian students have the opportunity to visit and study in Australia. I wish that Malaysian students such as myself realise the importance of education and absorbing new experiences, thus achieving greater success and possibly glorify Malaysia on an international scale.

I am so grateful to DKLS Foundation for this golden opportunity of visiting ANU campus and I hope that they will be more programmes where Malaysian students can improve their English skills. Last but not least, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation to Ms Nicole Vooi (DKLS) and Ms Alice Grainger (ANU) for their generosity and effort in making this study trip a reality for me and an extremely successful one.