# GOLD MEDALLIST 2018

# DKLS LINGUISTIC AMBASSADOR AWARD

## 15 – 21 FEBRUARY 2019

## REPORT ON STUDY TOUR TO AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

# DAY 0

At 1 pm, I was sitting in the airport with my uncle and father. We were just waiting for the time to come, when we would have to go through immigration and board the plane. It came soon enough, I briefly remember shaking my dad's hand and waving goodbye. The nervousness I had had earlier on transformed, it became energy and confidence. In turn, I used it to take pictures of our take-off.

We arrived at KLIA1 twenty minutes early – a good omen. We waited, and waited until it was time for us to board the aerotrain to the satellite terminal, where international departures take off. Waiting a few more hours, we finally boarded the plane to Sydney at 11 pm. Feeling a bit drowsy, sleep overtook me as I waited for the hours to fly by.

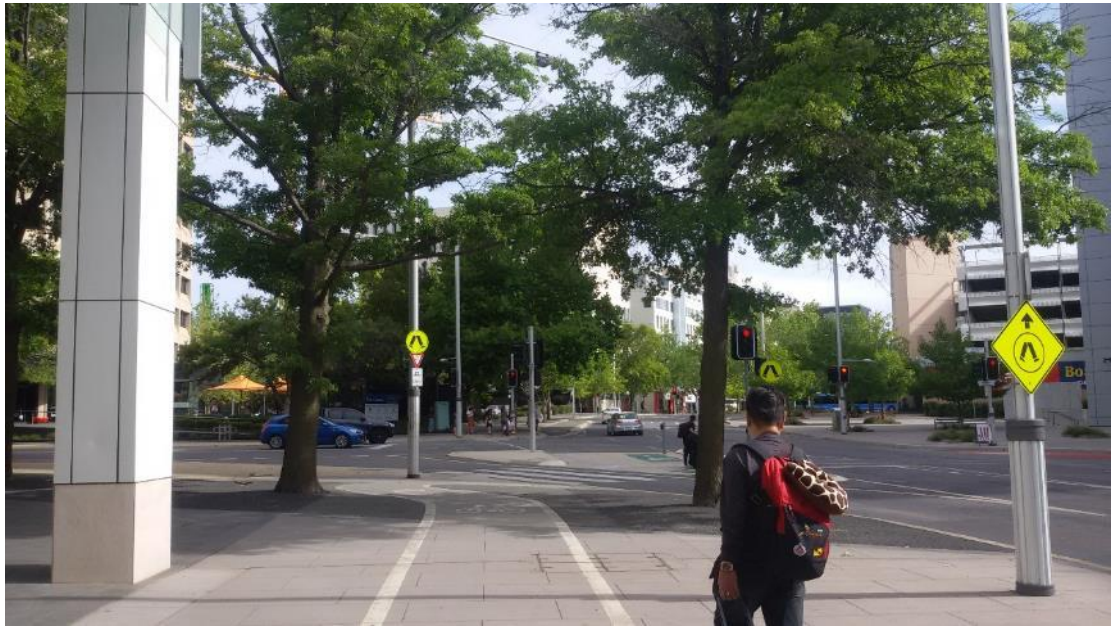
# DAY 1

Waking up at 5.30 am did not surprise me as I had been waking up at hourly intervals while on the plane. Forcing the window open, I was greeted by the orange hue of the Australian deserts. That was the first indication that I was getting closer and closer to my destination. My next indicator was when the land started turning lush with greenery and eventually evolved into a cityscape We landed soon enough, delighted to stretch our legs after such a long flight.

Walking around Sydney airport, the first priority was to get a working sim card! Both my uncle and I picked up the package that gave us plenty of mobile data and unlimited calls to Malaysia. Then we both grabbed something to eat. I opted for McDonald's while he opted for sushi. Later we met at the terminal where we would board the Murrays coach headed for Canberra. The coach was comfortable and also equipped with USB charging ports, which I utilised to its full potential. I also ended up stealing my seat partner's USB port when I saw him dozing off but not using it.

During the coach ride, the view was spectacular. We got to view more of farms, hills and lakes. Even so, I still ended up dozing off and only woke up when the coach hit a bump on the ride. I woke up in time to read a sign that said “North Canberra”.

A few minutes later, we disembarked at Jolimont Bay Centre. Watching most of the passengers walk off without hailing a taxi gave my uncle and me an idea. That’s how we ended up walking to the University House, dragging our luggage across the streets of Canberra. Luckily, we were traveling light, so it didn’t take long nor a lot of effort. While walking, I noted how quiet and peaceful Canberra was, with few people on the streets and fewer cars still.



Walking into the ANU grounds, there was nothing but trees, bushes and birds. It was all so beautiful. Finally arriving at university house, we checked in, paid the deposit and settled down in our hotel room while we waited for dinner time to come.

View of University House

When the time came, my uncle and I made our way to the city centre, where we dropped by a minimarket for some light shopping. Coincidentally, we also heard what sounded like a party nearby. Cautiously, we walked towards the sound, where we also ended up meeting large crowds of people, lots of cars and lots of music. It just so happened that on this day, a cultural festival was taking place in Canberra, with plenty of performances, food and people from around different parts of the world. We made our way into the crowd, where we settled for dinner, watched performances and had a little bit of interaction with the locals.

Singing performance by a band from the USA

The Golden Gaytime is an Australia exclusive ice-cream.

A few examples of food from other countries included German (top right), Arabian (bottom left) and Egyptian (bottom right).

A lion dance performance on the streets.

The crowd at the festival.

Eventually, the time for us to head back to the hotel came, and we slept in a bed for the first time in 48 hours.

# DAY 2

Waking up late on this day was both a surprise and a disappointment, it meant I missed my first breakfast at The Fellows, the café nearby. As I was readying to go to town, my uncle told me grim news: he would not be joining me for today's adventures, as he was feeling unwell and would like to stay in the room to rest. While discouraged, I had to go on.

When I arrived at the city centre, I decided to walk around before getting lunch. I noted that there was quite a lot of student accommodation around the city, within walking distance of the campus grounds, including UniLodge and Lena Karmel lodge. There was also an abundance of restaurants and places to eat, ranging from Dominos and McDonald's to shops specialising in salads and noodles. There was also a train track running alongside the main road, still in construction.

Ramen for lunch!

After dropping by University House to drop off takeaway ramen for my uncle, it was time for me to head to my destination – Lake Burley Griffin. I began my walk to the lake, slathering on copious amounts of sunscreen beforehand for good measure. I arrived 15 minutes later at the lakeside, with a stunning view of Commonwealth Bridge and the water fountain. There was also a bicycle track running along the side, where two cyclists whizzed past me as I stood by the lake.

In the distance, the Commonwealth Bridge can be seen bridging across the lake.

Walking around the side of the lake eventually bought me to another side of the lake, where there were boats sailing. Nearby was also the Acton memorial stone, which commemorated those who lost their houses and living places to the ever expanding lake. Spotting an odd orange structure in the distance, I made my way over to the National Australian Museum, entirely by coincidence.

Canberra's sailing club in action.

The pier was under construction unfortunately.

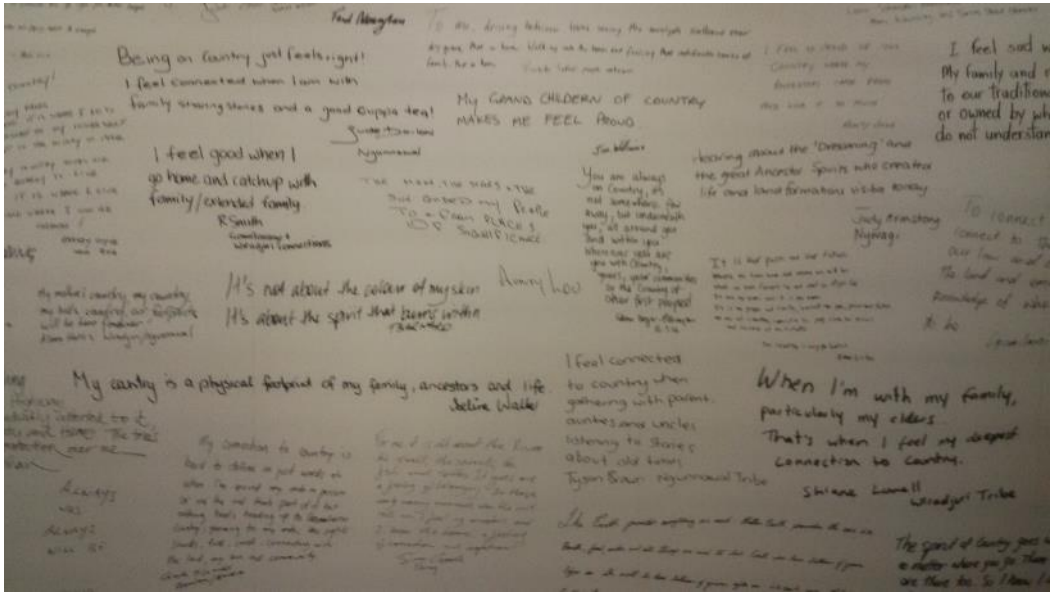
Spending the rest of my day at the museum, I browsed through the first set of displays. There were dissected platypuses, a video of the now extinct Thylacine (Tasmanian Tiger), the invasion of rabbits and other species of animals and Australia's biggest forest fires.

Dissections of animals exclusive to Australia, such as the wombat, koala, etc.

40 kg of wool sheared from Chris the sheep, a world record.

The second set of displays detailed the establishment of cities in Australia – Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and the like. It told us about the lives of the founders who came all the way to establish new cities, as well as the people they brought along and the tools they had at hand. The letters that they had penned were also on display. I walked past, unable to read their cursive handwriting.

A demonstration of how prisoners were brought into Australia.




The third set of displays paid special attention to the aboriginals, detailing their lives and the tools they used, as well as the bond they have with the land. There was information about how many officially recognised aboriginal tribes that currently still exist, as well as a wall featuring handwritten messages from the members of the aboriginal tribes.

"I feel most connected to my country when I stand still and listen, I can hear the voices of my people, my ancestors. "

These structures plays messages from the aboriginals in their mother tongue.

Unfortunately, it was then that my phone battery was deadly low, meaning I had to make it back to my hotel or risk not being able to use my phone to navigate back. Coincidentally, the time was also 5 pm, so I had to leave anyway. I grabbed my stuff and walked back to the hotel.

At night, my uncle and I walked to town to grab dinner. On our way, we spied several vans cleaning up and packing up the tents and rubbish leftover from yesterday. The cultural festival was over. We ate at Sammy's Kitchen, and went back to our hotel room, where we retired for the night.

# DAY 3

The day started off with breakfast with Ir. Sam and his wife at the Fellows, both were here for their annual Memorandum of Understanding with ANU. While chowing down on eggs and ham, Ir. Sam and his wife led a conversation on education in Australia. We were told not just about university life, but about high school life as well. Eventually, the time came when we had to leave for the lobby, where I would meet my guide, Ms. Helena Woods and Ir. Sam would meet with his.

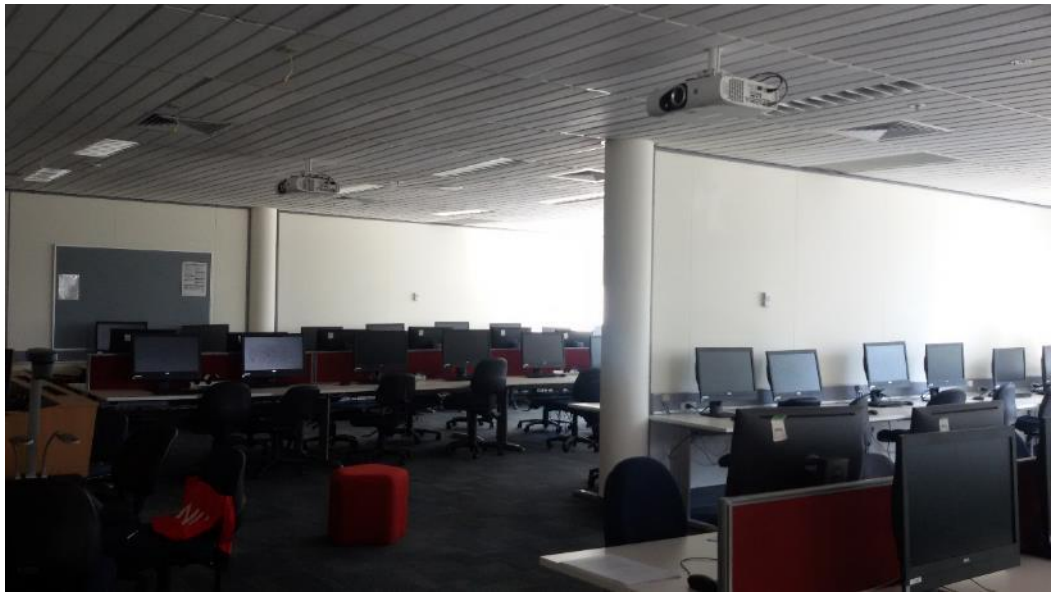
We were then led our separate paths, with Ms. Helena taking me over to see Professor Jochen Renz for our discussion on my interest: computer science. On the way there, we also passed by what would be the site of the ANU's commemoration address, with hundreds of empty chairs lining the square.

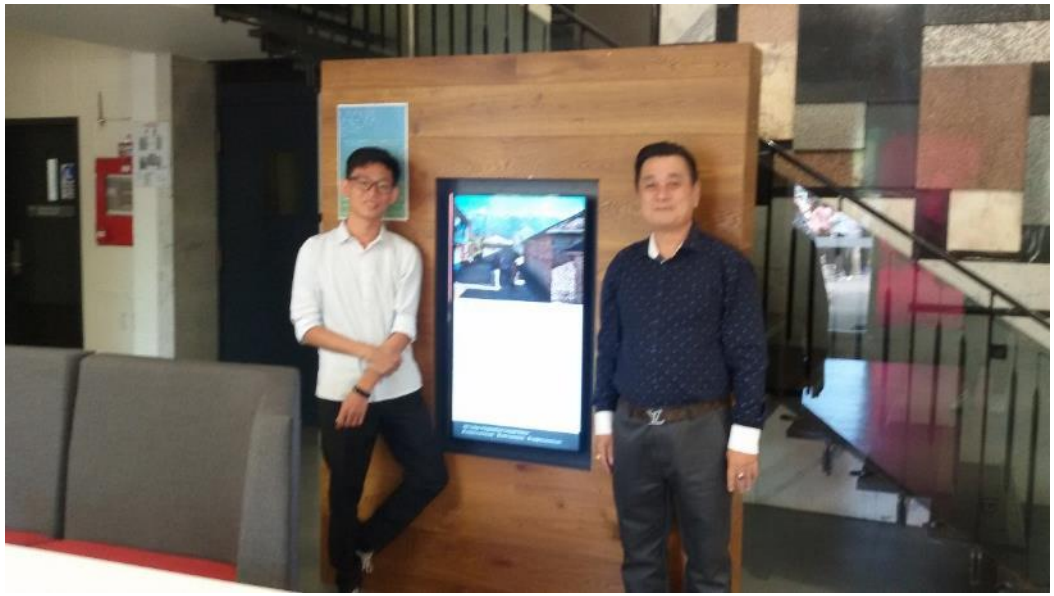
When I arrived at our meeting point, I was greeted by Reetika, the student recruitment assistant and Nigel, a student ambassador from ANU. Professor Jochen arrived soon, and we walked up to the room where we would have our discussion. Professor Jochen teaches AI, and explained to me about the development process he uses to make a functional AI. He also explained to me about the importance and problems faced by AI when encountering real life issues. In his words, “No AI has ever been able to play Angry Birds. Not even the smartest one can beat a human child.” At ANU, games like Angry Birds are used for AI development and research, as multiple environmental and internal factors can be controlled for testing.

Professor Jochen also told me about an AI competition that he organises – called AI Birds, focusing entirely on making AIs that could play… Angry Birds.  Professor Jochen, with a gleam in his eye, also invited me to join the competition with my own team. I was intrigued, and promised I would see what I could do.

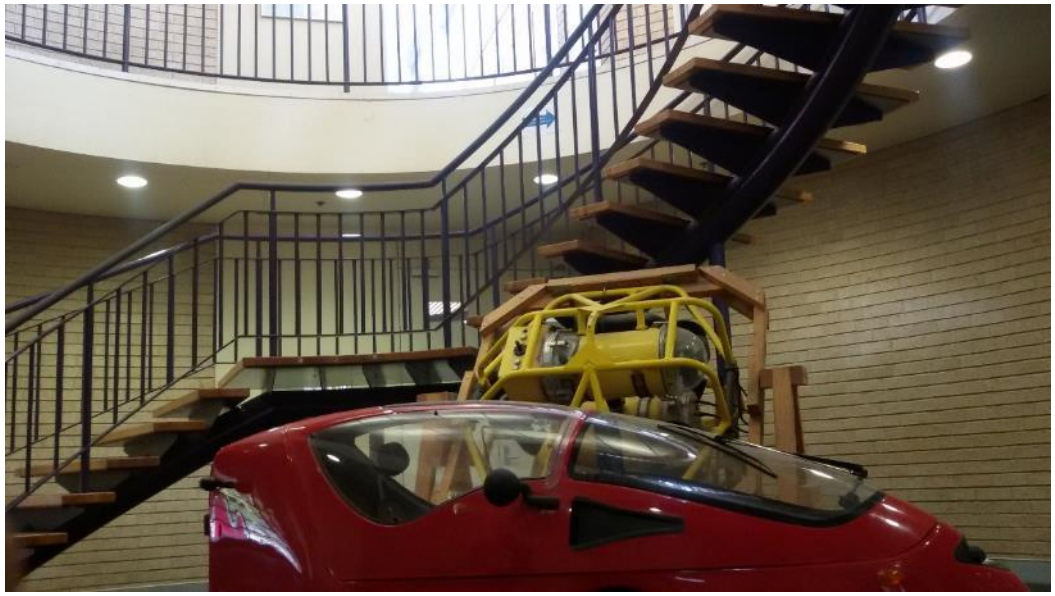
Unfortunately, the discussion was so interesting, we not only forgot to take a picture, we also ended up overshooting the time allocated.

After the discussion, Nigel guided me on a tour around the College of Engineering and Computer Science (CECS). Coincidentally, Nigel also happened to take his classes at CECS, so he showed me around his classrooms and lecture halls. After the tour was over, we made our way to the commencement address.





At the lobby of the College of Engineering and Computer Science.



An old miniature car model in the CECS, according to Nigel.

The commencement started off with a speech by Wally Bell, an Ngunawal Elder. After giving his warmest welcome to the students, the Vice Chancellor gave his welcoming speech, and talked about how ANU was a great place for students to kick-start their academic lives. Giving insights and rallying the spirits of the students in preparation for their new lives, the commencement address ended forty minutes later, where the massive crowd headed over to Kambri, the newest addition to ANU.

Kambri is a block of shops, where students can purchase daily essentials, food and mingle with other students and mentors. ANU had prepared a special barbeque to welcome all new students, giving a free hotdog to all students and parents alike.

After lunch in Kambri, it was time to head to Questacon. It was also time to say goodbye to Nigel. He gave me his number, promising to help me if I needed assistance.

At University House, I met with Ms. Helena, who subsequently hailed an Uber for me. My uncle had excused himself to his room, the barbeque was not sitting well with him. Thanking Ms. Helena, I was on my way to Questacon.

Questacon is the National Museum of Science and Technology, where it teaches us science, but through everyday objects and activities. Soon enough, I found myself reliving my high-school life, with all the science concepts that I had learned, sprawled in front of me in the form of fun games or information booths.

While in Questacon, I met Joel, a native 18 year old. We bonded quickly, and I took the opportunity to talk to him. Together, we both learned a little more about each other's home countries and their communities. He had to leave in a hurry, leaving with me with no opportunity to take a picture.

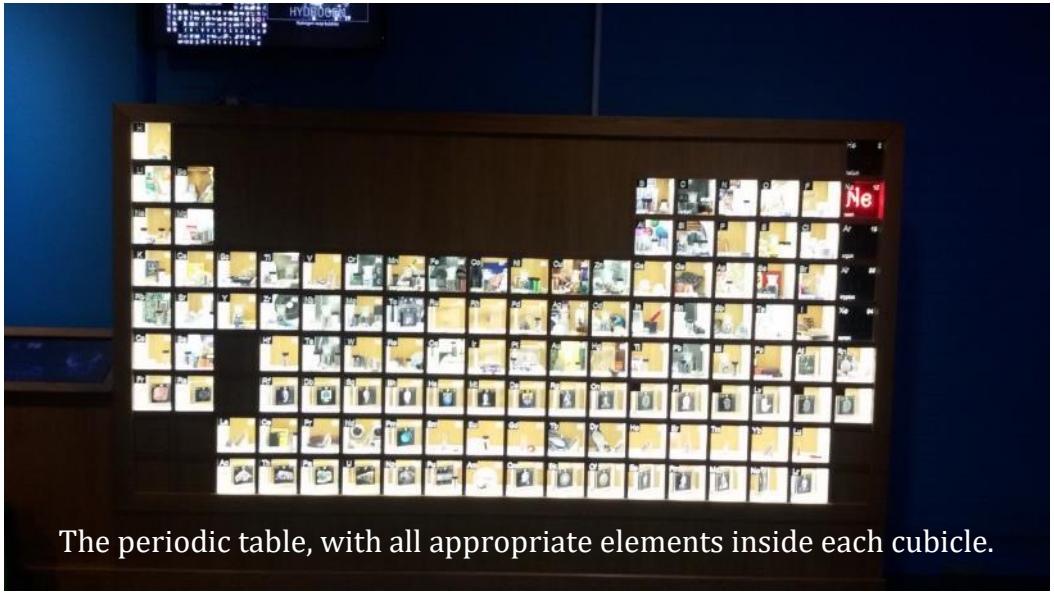
Plays musical notes when a hand is passed through its sensors.

A kaleidoscope made out of multiple mirrors.

A model showing which part of the world is experiencing daylight.

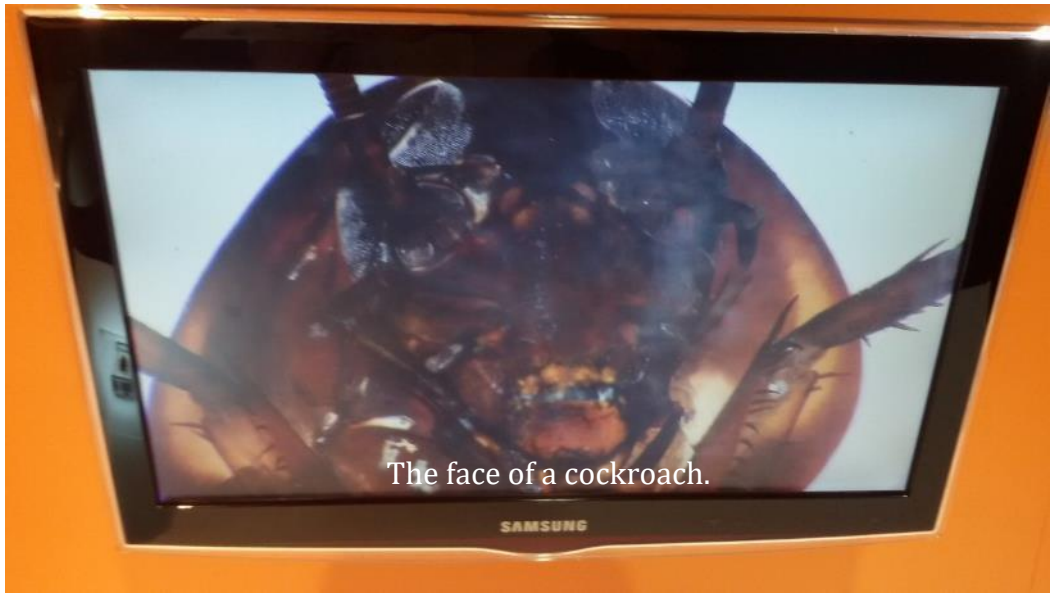
A hyper realistic scale model of the moon.

Fossil of a now extinct fish species in Australia




The periodic table, with all appropriate elements inside each cubicle.

Using a microscope to view insects and bugs up close and personal.

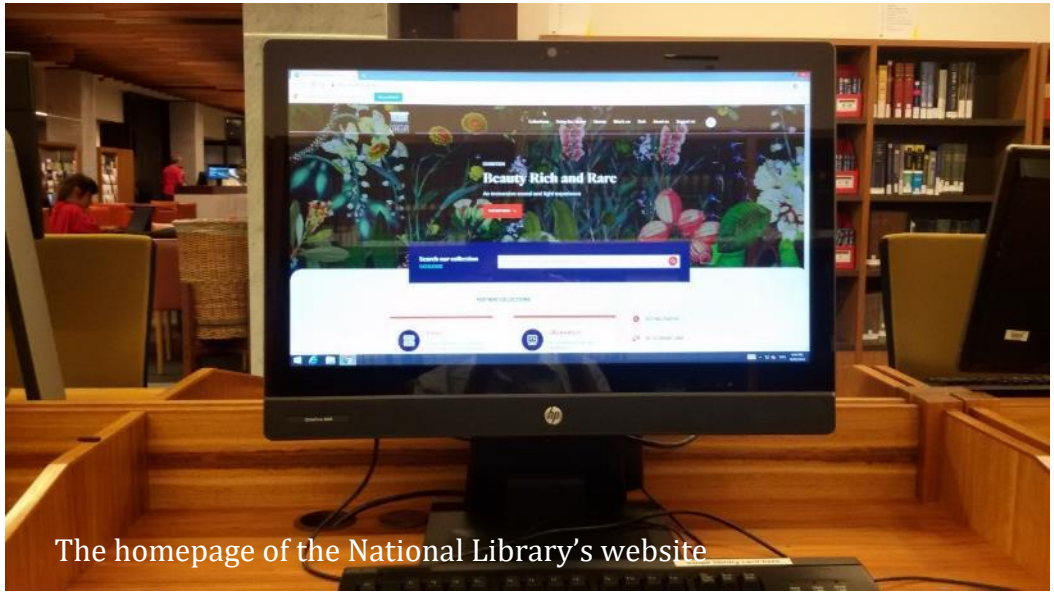



The face of a cockroach.

After Questacon, I headed for the National Library, which was just across the road. Entering the library, the first thing I noted was the number of computers that were available. Looking around, the only books I could find were dictionaries. Curiously, I sat at a computer, tapping away at the keyboard. As it turned out, they had an entirely digitalised library!

At 5 p.m., I took a taxi back home, as the first rain shower I'd experienced since arriving started pouring down.

Every book available in the library's archives can be accessed by searching for it online.



The homepage of the National Library's website

Two hours later, my uncle and I were seated at dinner with Ir. Sam and his wife, at a place called Jimmy's. There, we got the opportunity to explore more of each other's personal lives over dinner. Ir. Sam was also excited to tell me about places to eat while in Canberra and Sydney. After dinner was over, Ir. Sam drove us back to University House so we could retire for the night.

However, at the lobby, Ir. Sam offered to walk around the campus grounds with his wife and me, as I had previously not taken the initiative to walk around at night. I agreed, and soon we were hunting for sights of elusive animals on the campus grounds. After the walk, I thanked Ir. Sam for his kindness, and the night's activities were then over.

# Day 4

The day started with the regular breakfast at the Fellows. We then met with Ms. Helena at the lobby, and we made our way to the place where we would meet Professor Ian Higgins, head of English in ANU. Professor Ian welcomed us warmly, in his room filled with books and references. He told me about the courses offered at ANU, the differences between studying English and studying creative writing as well as the courses offered in ANU related to English. Professor Ian also informed me about some of the great achievements by ANU Alumni who managed to become renowned authors after their studies here in ANU.

After the discussion with Professor Ian, Ms. Helena led us to the meeting place for the ANU campus tour. During the tour, we were shown places of interest for students, such as the facilities in Kambri, the lectures halls, computer labs, libraries and offices. It wasn't long before lunch rolled by, and I had to catch the Canberra city bus tour. I grabbed lunch at Outback Jack's, one of Ir. Sam's recommended places to eat and hopped on the bus.

Several shops in Kambri are still under construction, and hence, not open yet.

HARRY HARTOG
BOOKSELLER

CLUBLIME
Health a
Wellbein
Pool &

REX

With Kambri being the new hotspot for students, Pop-Up Village was temporarily closed for renovations.

At the student commons, students get to meet up to relax and even ask for help from mentors and each other.

View of the libraries in ANU.

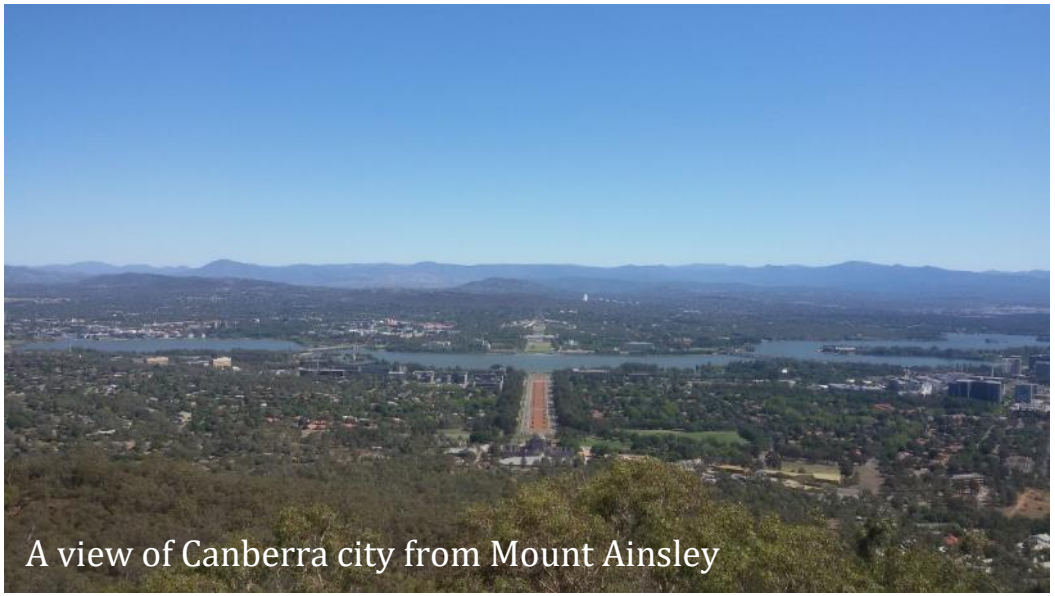
While there are computers available, most books are still only available in hardcopy.

Chatime in Kambri

Takeaway crocodile burger from Outback Jacks.

On the bus tour, we were driven to many iconic locations around Canberra, such as the Arboretum - for a bird's eye view of Canberra, Weston Park - for kangaroo sighting (we didn't see any, unfortunately), a tour of the all the embassies, Parliament House, Mount Ainsley and Regatta Point, the tourist and visitors centre in Canberra.

A bird's eye view of nature from the Arboretum



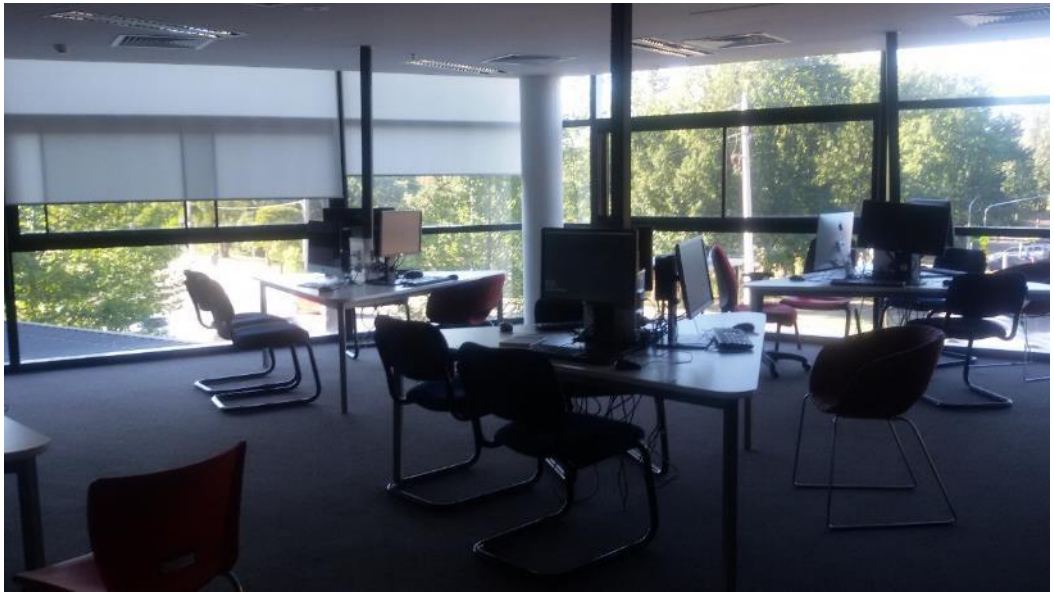
A view of Canberra city from Mount Ainsley

Picture in front of Parliament House

View of a discontinued train service in Weston Park

Stopping by Regatta Point to purchase souvenirs

After arriving back at ANU, I still had plenty of time to kill, so I called Nigel, asked if I could get access to a computer lab. He agreed, and soon I was sitting in Lena Karmel's computer lab, filling out the details of my trip so far.



After that, it was a regular night, and we retired early because the next day was going to be a long one.

# Day 5

From left to right: Herwindu, Me, Ms. Helena and Jacob

It was finally time for my last breakfast at the Fellows. It was finally time, for my last look around my room in University House. Then it was off to the Street Theatre to meet Herwindu, a member of the International Student Recruitment Team. Herwindu used to be a student at ANU, and he ended up working at the university too. Since Herwindu's team was in charge of coordinating efforts to reach out to potential students in Asia, I asked him about the scholarship opportunites available to students in Malaysia. Herwindu stated that ANU teams up with many partners such as Petronas to bring students over to ANU. Meeting us at the street theatre was also Jacob, ex-president of MASCA ACT, the Malaysian Student Council of Australia in Canberra. Jacob was a graduate of ANU's school of business, and now works with them as part of the administration team. Jacob informed me about the activities organised by the Malaysian community in ANU as well as by the Malaysian Embassy such as the Chinese New Year open house organised by the Malaysian Embassy. All the activities were organised to let homesick Malaysians experience home away from home. After that, we had a casual chat about Canberra, ANU and Australia, with many jokes and laughs.

Herwindu had also bought me a bag full of goodies – several t-shirts, flyers and books about ANU. I am now also the proud owner of three golden pens, which according to Herwindu, were unique and the only of their kind. I thanked him for his kindness, and we left for market day.

At Kambri, the rows of tents lined for market day were astonishing and bustling with activity. I said my final goodbye to Ms. Helena here, as I disappeared into the crowd.

Market day at ANU was focused on exposing students to the different clubs and activities available on campus. However, it wasn't just limited to on campus clubs, as many different clubs from the city were also present. Walking through the crowd, it really was mind blowing to see how some clubs that could not exist in Malaysia existed here on campus. Examples would be the revolutionaries club, the LGBTQI club, the politics club, and many more.

A web design company

At market day, it's not just school clubs that come out to play. Some companies also send teams to promote their services or goods!

The local medieval club

Australia's take on diversity allows clubs like these to exist on campus to provide support and help.

The mini-golf club giving students a chance to play mini-golf.

ANU
Queer*
DEPT.

Kendo

ANU
Disabilities
Student
Association
Email
PITCH
YOUR
PASSION

한국학생회
KSS
Korean Students Association
ANU
K·POP
CLUB
INSTA: ANU_KPOP
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ANU
music
society

ANU
Debating
NU Fashion and Beauty
Appreciation Society

THE LAST EVER LAW REVUE
AUDITIONS
EVER
Auditions for the Law Revue are going to be held on Monday 4 March - Wednesday 6 March from 1830-2030
ANU LAW STUDENTS' SOCIETY
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WHAT IS LAW REVUE?!
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DETAILS RE: AUDITIONS FOUND BELOW
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ANU ESPORTS
FAB SOC
ANU Fashion and Beauty
Appreciation Society

A picture with Nethum from Sri Lanka, whom I played Frisbee with.

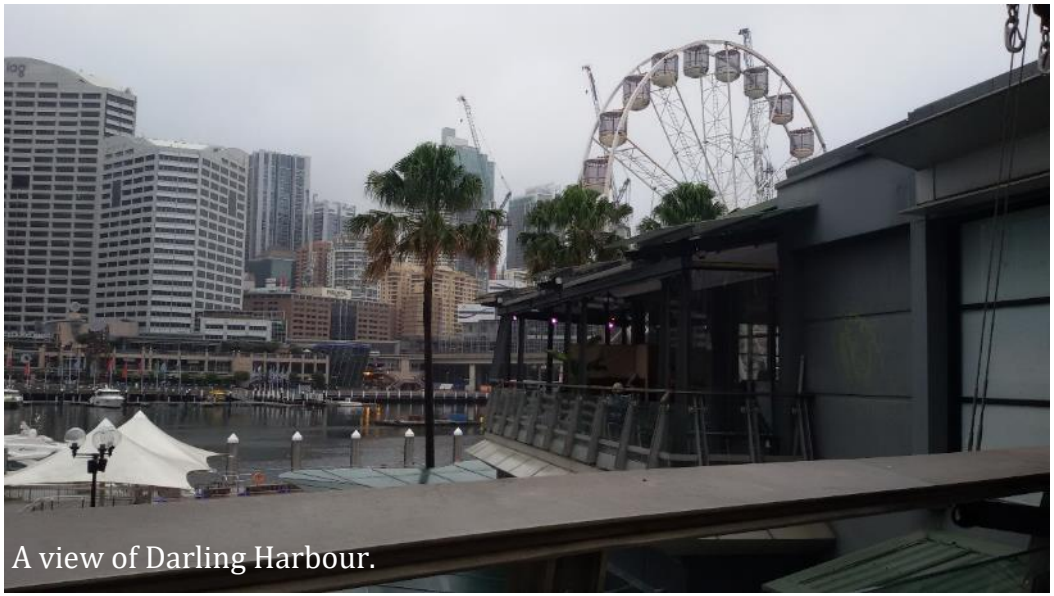
MSO connects Malaysian students together by sending them emails weekly and organising events as frequently as possible.

The Frisbee club gave opportunities to students to try out Frisbee and gave prizes to those who succeeded.

Then it was off to Sydney!

We arrived in Sydney at roughly 5 pm. Tired from the journey, I rested first, before heading out at 6 pm. I was off to Darling Habour, the nearest tourist attraction to spend the rest of my evening.

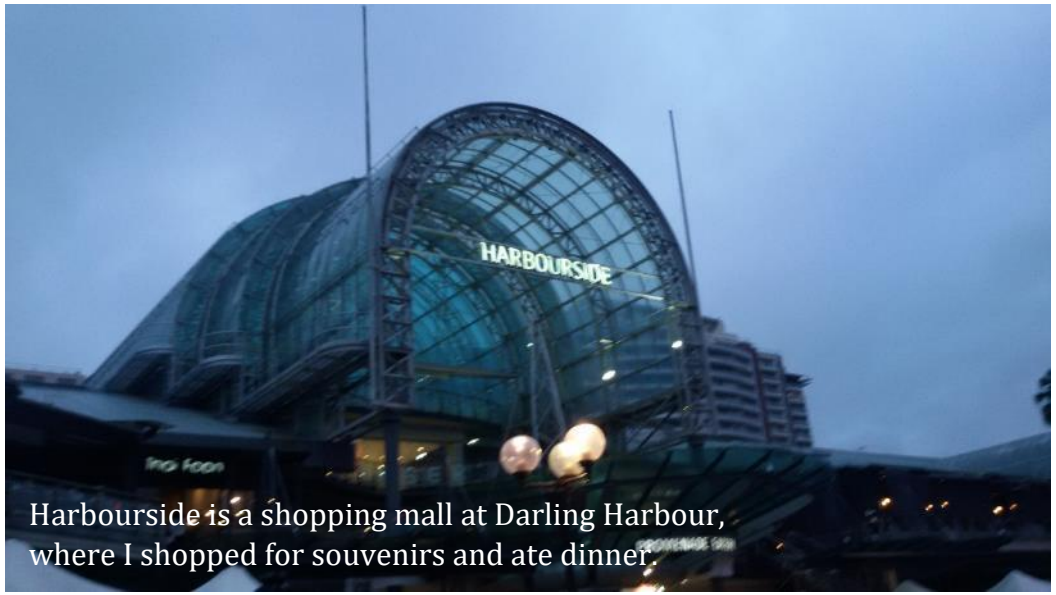
The Chinese Garden of Friendship



A view of Darling Harbour.

At Hurricane Grill, one of Ir. Sam's recommendations.

Last view of Darling Habour before I left.




Harbourside is a shopping mall at Darling Harbour, where I shopped for souvenirs and ate dinner.

## Day 6

Before leaving for the airport, my uncle and I grabbed Vietnamese sandwiches for breakfast. Taking a taxi to the airport, I slowly watched as the buildings grew smaller and smaller. Soon, we boarded the plane, and as I stared out of the plane window, I heard my uncle groan for the window to be shut. Smiling, I shut the window and said goodbye.

# Reflection

If I had to give my journey to ANU a title, I would definitely call it “Justin In Wonderland”. Canberra truly is a city of peace and tranquillity, which makes it very suitable for student life. The lack of nightlife in Canberra further cements this point. Besides that, the city seems to be equal parts nature and buildings – the trees and the shrubs all blended perfectly with the buildings to give a sensation of beauty and elegance to the city.

My favourite part of my trip however, was interacting with all the locals and people who lived there. The community there was one that celebrated friendliness and diversity as a part of daily life. Time and time again, I found myself pleasantly surprised by the locals, waiters or even the cashiers when they suddenly decided to chat with me or pose in my pictures.

Overall, it is my hope that future ambassadors from this competition get to enjoy what I did. I am sure that just like me and those before, their memories of ANU will be something they won’t forget for the rest of their lives. I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to those who assisted me during this journey, especially Ms.  Nicole Vooi (DKLS), Ir. Sam and his wife (DKLS), Ms. Helena Woods (ANU) and the many more from ANU and DKLS Foundations. It’s been a blast. Thank you.