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**Degree Program at TAU: MBA**

**Host University: University of New South Wales, Sydney Australia**

**Exchange term: Term 3, 2019 (September-December)**

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## Exchange Experience

### General

In general, the exchange experience in Australia was amazing.

The exchange students join the full-time cohort, which consists of about 50 students of which less than half are Australian and the rest are internationals. The really small and diverse group of students make it very easy to find friends, have joint activities and meet people. The average age of the students is relatively high, similar to the one in Coller. Every exchange student has a “buddy” assigned from the full-time cohort, and exchange students are always invited to activities such as beach volleyball, lectures, trips and events.

### The City

Sydney is a huge and very spread-out city. It’s built of many neighborhoods which aren’t very close together. Public transport is good, but there’s a lot of distance to cover between interesting spots and things to do, so there isn’t a single “central” place to be.

Sydney is an amazing city with a huge focus on lifestyle and leisure. There’s great food, especially from India and the Far East, and great coffee. Everyone feels like Australia is very expensive, but coming from Israel it’s not that bad except for accommodation. Eating out costs as much as it would in Tel Aviv, sometimes less. Supermarkets are cheaper since Australia has all-local agriculture and very good and cheap meat. Australians are very health-conscious – Everything is organic and there’s a gym in every corner. There’s high-end restaurants and great cheap street food, and everything is amazing. If you like food like we do, you’d have new places to go to every

single day. Don't bring any excess household stuff – There's a chain called K-mart that sells everything from towels to pots and pans for *extremely* cheap. As far as nightlife goes, there are bars everywhere and Australians love to drink and have fun. Plenty of bars are in the CBD, but the main nightlife areas are Surry Hills and Newtown.

### Accommodation and transportation

The university itself is in the Randwick neighborhood, which isn't very central (Although it has the best pizza in the city in Maybe Frank that has "bottomless pizza Tuesdays"). It isn't very close to the beach (especially Bondi) or the CBD. Although a new tram line has just opened between the CBD and the university, Randwick is not a very interesting place to live and we would recommend choosing a different neighborhood. A new tram line improves accessibility from Surry Hills, an area with plenty of bars, restaurants and things to do. Another good option is Bondi Junction, where we lived most of the time, for several reasons: It's next to a central subway and bus station, making the rest of the city very accessible. It's around a -huge- mall with 4 supermarkets, shops and everything you need, and it's a short bus ride (10-15 minutes) to the beach. The subway is much faster and more comfortable than buses, and getting from Bondi Junction to the city center is very quick and easy. Many people stay in famous Bondi Beach, but it takes really long to get from Bondi beach to any other neighborhood (~1 hour by bus to the university).

We are a couple so we stayed most of the time in apartments by ourselves, with a kitchen and everything. Finding accommodation in Sydney can be tough, and prices are high – for a flat with roommates, prices are about 300-500 AUD per week. For a flat alone it can be much higher. That fee usually includes all the bills. Land owners also want a "bond" for the apartment, to make sure you don't damage it.

There are several relevant Facebook groups: Bondi Local Loop, Accommodation in Sydney etc. For apartment sublets, join the Israeli groups such as משפחות ישראליות and בני זילנד. For traveling ideas there are groups such as אוסטרליה ניו-זילנד and למטיילים. Two websites to look at are Gumtree and Flatmates. The city has plenty of people on temporary working visas from all around the world, so there is a lot of movement and openings. Don't try to find a place 2 months in advance – the supply is high and changes all the time, and people don't offer them in advance. Many people also post photoshopped pictures of their apartments, especially on the websites and especially real-estate agents, so be skeptical. Most of the time we stayed in sublet apartments from Israelis who went on vacation or to Israel. Because we sometimes had short periods between trips, we occasionally had to spend a lot and stay at a hotel.

Public transport is very comfortable and easy using the local "Opal" card. You can buy it at bookstores in the airport and then charge it using the app. A bus/train ride usually costs about 3\$ depending on the distance, including transfers. On Sundays there is a

cap of 2.80\$ no matter the distance or time you ride – So you should take advantage of it to go on trips (Blue Mountains for example) and pay next to nothing.

Local sim cards should be bought at Aldi (The supermarket chain). You buy a 5\$ card at the Aldi supermarket and then charge it using their website. The best package we used was the 25\$ package – 18 GB of data, unlimited calls in Australia and 15 other countries and 100 minutes everywhere else (including Israel). It also runs on the “Telstra” infrastructure which has the best coverage in Australia.

### Visa

Getting a visa to Australia is a bit of a hassle and takes time on their website. You can get either a visitor visa or a student visa. A student visa costs more and requires local health insurance. If you don't plan to work during your exchange, you should get a visitor visa. The only bad thing about it is that your stay is limited to 3 months, so you need to leave the country once and come back (A short trip to New Zealand...). **Don't forget to put a bank statement in the visa application, even though the website doesn't say it's mandatory. They will reject your visa unless you put a bank statement in.** We had to pay for a visa application twice because of that.

### Flights

Flying to Australia is also complicated. The best option we found was with Korean who fly through Seoul, and on the way back give you an overnight stay at a hotel in Seoul Airport between the flights. Other options are through places in China, Thailand and India. There should also be direct line to Melbourne with El Al in the future, and from there it's just a 1 hour flight to Sydney.

Getting from the airport to the city can be done by train, but for more than one person an Uber costs roughly the same and takes you directly home. We found that to/from the airport Uber is the most comfortable way and is sometimes even cheaper.

### Weather

Although Sydney is perceived as a “summer city” with good weather and beaches, we arrived in winter which was cold and rainy. It's similar to winter in Tel Aviv, only the winds are stronger and colder. Surfing can be done in winter and summer as long as you bring/buy/hire a suit. In general, you need to bring clothes for all weather types – from winter clothes to flip flops and a bathing suit. If you plan to travel in New Zealand, you need even warmer clothing.

## The Classes

The university classes are at an extremely high level. The school is considered the best in Australia for an MBA. The campus is huge, beautiful and well maintained, with coffee shops at every corner. The classes themselves are at a much higher level than we're used to at home: Professors really put energy into teaching, material is usually given out before every lesson and some lecturers do cold-calling and expect you to listen and know the material. Class attendance is mandatory. Students usually participate a lot in lessons and take their studies seriously (since it's a full-time program). You can also pick courses from the part-time program, which are also excellent. Some courses are "Intensives" – instead of weekly meetings, classes are held during 2 weekends from 9 to 5. Although it's a bit tiring, it's worth it since it really clears your schedule to travel and have flexible time schedule.

We took 3 courses and were *very* happy with all three of them:

1. Strategies for Growth – a "half-intensive" class that didn't happen every single week but in whole days. Lots of reading material, and every lesson has a case to read in advance and it's solved live in class using student participation. The professor (Patrick Sheary) is excellent and interesting and the material is also well-prepared and useful.
2. Entrepreneurship from the Inside – This class is a little busy but totally worth it. Every student gets a local Sydney start-up and works with them one whole day a week, on a pre-defined project the startup chose with the professor. This is a great opportunity to see a local start-up, meet people, learn a whole new field and experiment with a very "MBA" type project. The schedule is flexible between you and the company, so this also allows flexibility in planning longer trips during your exchange. We both had great experiences in the start-ups, learned a lot and met awesome local people.
3. Negotiation Skills – We took the Executive MBA intensive course. This course was also incredibly well made. Every intensive day had at least one, usually two, simulation of negotiation. The professor is really experienced and we learned a ton in this class. A bonus for executive intensive courses – You get free food and coffee all day... Notice that there is a negotiation class for the full-time which happens every week, but we heard it isn't as good as the intensive one. Try to get the class with Ray Fells as professor.

Furthermore, tests are pretty strict and happen in one "exam week" at the end of the semester. The three classes we took all had papers or projects rather than exams. They were fairly big and time-consuming, but it also allows flexibility.

The final tip regarding the classes is that the selection is not as broad as in Tel Aviv, so choose carefully. You should also consider your traveling schedule and make plenty of time for flights around Australia and to New Zealand.

## Traveling

If you fly to the other end of the world – try to take advantage of it. Australia is huge so you will need to fly to most places, except for places around Sydney (which are great for day-trips). Flights are cheap when you book well in advance, and become much more expensive on short notice. We went to Melbourne, the Great Ocean Road, The Whitsunday Islands and New Zealand. All are extremely beautiful and highly recommended. Flights are usually cheapest from Jetstar (Qantas's low cost company).

Finally, don't miss Gelato Messina – A local ice cream chain. They make everything from scratch (even the milk) and have new flavors every single week. Follow them on Instagram and try not to eat there every day :)

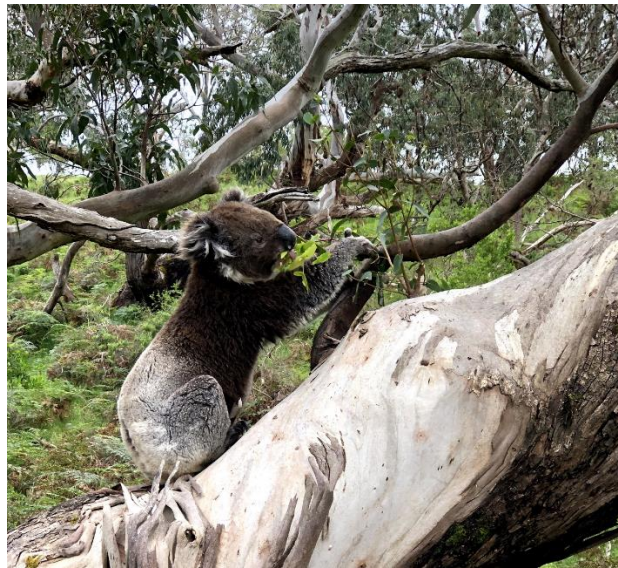
**The exchange is an amazing experience and Australia is far more amazing than we could imagine. We had incredible trips and met great people from all around the world.**



An average day in Sydney



Whitsunday Islands



Wild Koala on the Great Ocean Road