

## 2012 Cairns study tour

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I was surprised and thrilled when I knew from my teacher that I was lucky enough to be chosen as one of the 20 Macau students to go to Cairns. It was a one-month trip which we could learn English and experience the Australian culture. This was absolutely a wonderful and unforgettable experience for us, the lucky 20 students.

We had a variety of different educational programmes in Cairns State High School. Every morning, we had Ms Marianne and Ms Karen teaching us patiently with great passion. They tried to arouse our interests in learning English and encouraged us to learn and speak more by providing us with different in-class activities such as movie watching and poem writing. These activities helped to stimulate our creativity, and improve our writing and listening skills. We also had different English lessons focusing on grammar, comprehension reading, oral, and writing. All were valuable and interesting and we learnt a lot. The two teachers did not only point out our mistakes but discussed the concepts with us and explained the corrections to us. They encouraged us to think more - to extend and organize our thoughts and ideas in a better way while we were discussing social issues or when we were having debates. We also had bush dancing, drama performance and folk songs such as "I am Australian" and "Waltzing Matilda." In this way we also got to know more about the Australian traditions and culture. We also learnt a lot of interesting Aussie expressions, idioms and slangs which helped improve our speaking and communication. As a result, we are now far

more confident to speak to native English speakers. We really enjoyed the English classes! We also had 'buddies' with whom we attended regular lessons. I really do appreciate their learning attitude since they're all willing to learn from their mistakes and learn from each other.

On Fridays we had excursions. They were unforgettable and enjoyable! We went to the Cairns Tropical Zoo, Green Island, Tjapukai aboriginal cultural park and up to the Tablelands. We were all amazed by the great biodiversity of the marine life, the endangered species in the zoo, and we really loved those aboriginal paintings!

I got along with my host family very well during the four weeks I stayed with them, and we talked a lot about the differences in our culture. As a result, I got to know more about the local Aussie traditions. At home, we watched the London 2012 Olympic Games together and we supported our countries respectively - Australia and China! We also had a great time sharing our ideas on different current issues after dinner. I tried Vegemite, which was extremely salty, and my host family showed me how to do the "Tim Tam Slam." It was very delicious! I love Tim Tams! We had great times chatting, sharing, and playing together and I miss them a lot!

The trip has definitely broadened my horizons and I saw a great improvement in my listening and speaking skills in English.

