

## **‘Go Big or Go Home’, says McMaster Communication Studies student who opted to study in Australia.**

As university leaders in Canada are urging students to study abroad, Daniela Carlucci is ahead of the pack, and took a semester out last year to study in Sydney, Australia. For Daniela, it was a natural decision as she had always loved travelling and a conversation in her first year at McMaster with an exchange student who had returned from France, sold her on the idea. Wanting to study in an English-speaking country, she chose Australia as it’s much further than Europe. “Go Big or Go Home”, she adds.

Daniela did a lot of preparation before her trip, and was lucky enough to secure university-owned housing at the University of Sydney. Apparently residence housing is not common in Australia and is generally reserved for new students, as most local students live at home while they study.



When asked if there are any differences between university life/education in Canada and in Australia, Daniela answers “Definitely. It sounds cliché, but everything is much more laid back in Australia. The mantra there is *‘work to live, not live to work’*, and this applies to all facets of life, including student life”.

She didn’t experience a lot of ‘culture shock’ but she did miss her friends and family, although she kept in regular contact on skype. “It’s not the same as seeing them in person, but it’s pretty close, and I spoke to my family every day”, she explains.

When asked about her most memorable experiences, Daniela found it difficult to pick just one as there were so many – but perhaps the ones that stuck foremost in her mind were skydiving and swimming with sharks, both of which she never thought she’d actually go through with.

Following her study abroad experience, Daniela has no hesitation in recommending other students to study abroad. “It is one of the most liberating experiences in life. Studying abroad requires you to be adaptable, resourceful and independent. Whether you want to or not, you will grow exponentially and that is invaluable. Don’t be afraid—the things you’re afraid of are usually the most worthwhile!”

### **Daniela's tips for other students considering studying abroad:**

- Be Prepared! Know as much about the place you're going to before you arrive! Buy books, read blogs, download maps and talk to other students who have been there. If possible, get in touch with students from your host institution that are currently on exchange at your university as they will have the best information about housing, cost of living, lifestyle, etc.
- Most importantly, make a budget and stick to it. There's nothing worse than being unable to do all the fun things you planned because you're short on cash.