

In Year 11, I was lucky enough to go on an exchange to Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School in Western Australia, two hours south of Perth. This was the first exchange between the two schools. I left in the second week of the October school holidays.

The exchange to Bunbury was for three weeks and I stayed with my exchange student, Harry Wilson, and his family.

This exchange was a great opportunity to study at another school in a different country. I was very fortunate because Harry and I got on well. His friends became my friends and the other students were very welcoming towards me.

Bunbury Cathedral Grammar School is situated 15 minutes south of Bunbury town centre. It is a co-ed school with about 625 students, a similar size to College. A lot of the students live far away from the school, so school buses are provided from towns such as Dunsborough and Busselton. The school was a lot more active during morning tea and lunchtime breaks, where they played sports such as basketball and Aussie rules. Not many would be on their phones. I attended all of Harry's lessons with him, but mainly did my own work.

During the weekends, I was lucky enough to go sightseeing with Harry's family. We went to places like Dunsborough and Busselton. We visited the longest pier in the southern hemisphere – Busselton jetty. We also went to Ngilgi Cave, which is Western Australia's first tourist attraction. We went to beautiful white sandy beaches – Yallingup and Meelup. We also travelled to Perth for a weekend and visited iconic places such as Kings Park and The Bell Tower.

After three weeks, Harry and I flew to Christchurch together and Harry stayed with us for three weeks. We arrived on the Saturday in time for the Year 11 semi-formal. The next day, Harry helped participate in the Julius House cycling fundraiser for mental health. Then, on the Monday night, we had the Julius House prize-giving. Harry's arrival into New Zealand was very busy and having jetlag, with a five-hour time

difference, did not help. During his weekends, we took Harry to Akaroa and Queenstown.

I encourage the boys to take opportunities like these where you are able to go somewhere else, experience a different school, and live with a different family. For me, it was an international adventure. It is a good way to meet new friends. I have made a friend for life and Harry will be coming over this Christmas.

I strongly encourage you to consider an exchange with a Round Square school. If you are interested in the idea, please arrange to meet Mr Donaldson.