

September 2026

Rotary
District 9660



Rotary
Youth
Exchange

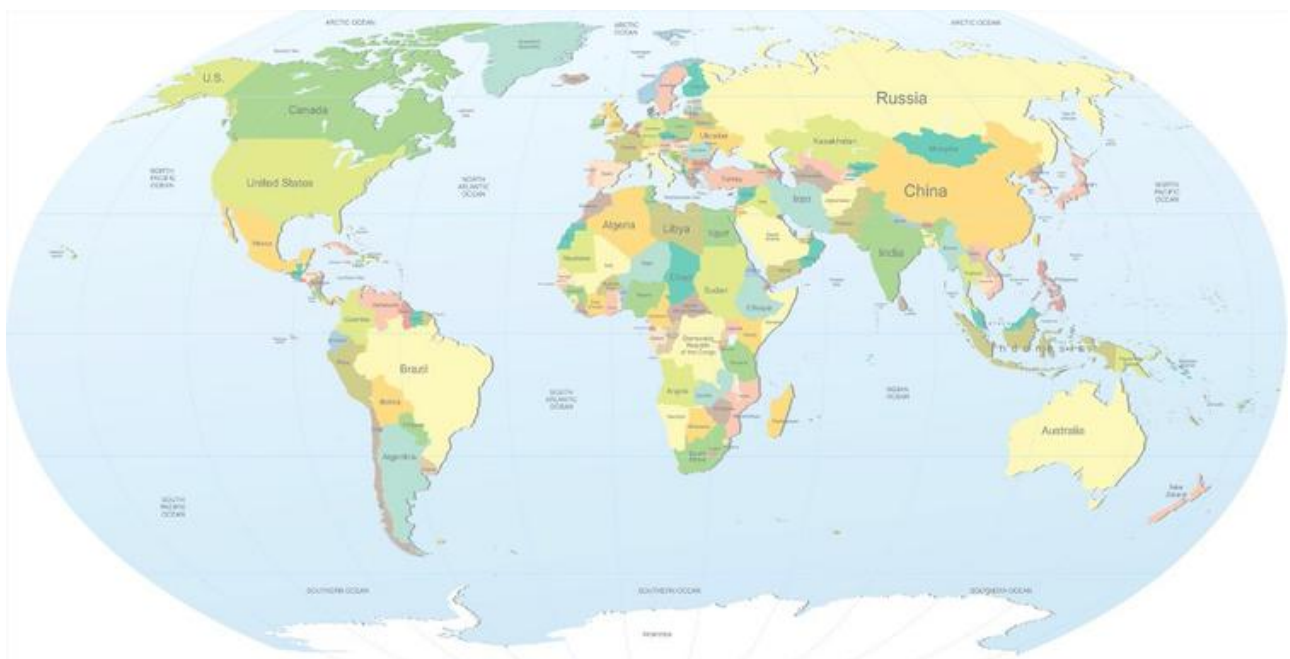
Yepper

Inbound & Outbound YEP 26/27



rotary youth exchange D9660

District Chair	Secretary
Diana Christian	Christopher Morgan
Rotary Club of Bellingren	Rotary Club of East Maitland
+61 402 901 273	+61 423 072 991
youthexchange.chair@rotary9660.org.au	youthexchange.secretary@rotay9660.org.au



**Applications for
2028 are NOW**

YOUTH EXCHANGE
is a one for one
exchange
12 OUT = 12 IN

Term

30th September 2026

- Preliminary application OPEN for Youth Exchange in 2028
- Clubs to contact their local schools for suitable candidates
- Both Long Term & Short Term exchange

3rd & 4th April 2027

- Interviews for LTEP & STEP in

7th May 2027

- OB Coordinator to contact all successful students and advise to commence the full application.

30th June 2027

- Student to complete the full application and upload to YEAH

11th & 12th September 2027

- 1st Briefing weekend
- Students will begin their visa applications

End of November 2027

- 2nd Briefing weekend

Early - January

- OB Students 2027 arrive home from exchange
- Student zoom check in with YEO

Mid - January

- OB Students 2028 leave for exchange

31st March 2027

- Applications CLOSE for both exchanges

October 2026 – March 2027

- Clubs to interview and help students prepare for district

1st May 2027

- Advise club President if student successful or not
- Preliminary country allocation only.
- Country not confirmed until country formally accepts the student.

student applicants

31st August 2027 – Guide-line Only

- Students have been accepted in the preliminary country
- Student will begin to receive information about their hosting club and family
- Students begin learning the

October 2027

- Students - continues documentation for Visa's
- Language lessons continue departure preparation of



Clubs now

- 
- 30th September 2026
 - Invitation to Clubs to Host a student in 2027-28
 - Clubs to complete the hosting form and return to YEP Committee

1st November 2026

- 
- Followup with Rotary clubs of D9660

1st December 2026

- 
- Confirm all clubs or follow up again

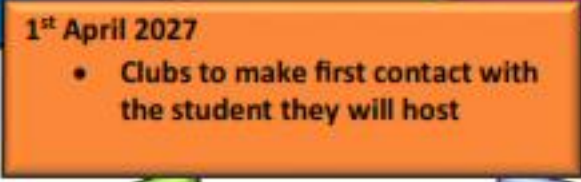
1st March 2027

- 
- All Inbound Student applications received by YEP Chair
 - Send all documents to Hosting Clubs

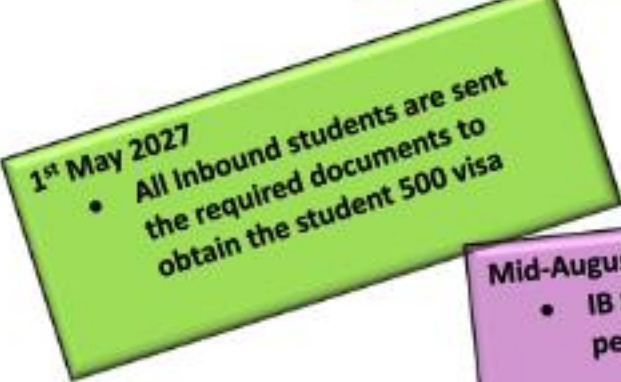
15th March 2027

- 
- All documents signed to be returned to the Inbound Coordinator
 - Dept of Education, takes up to 14 days

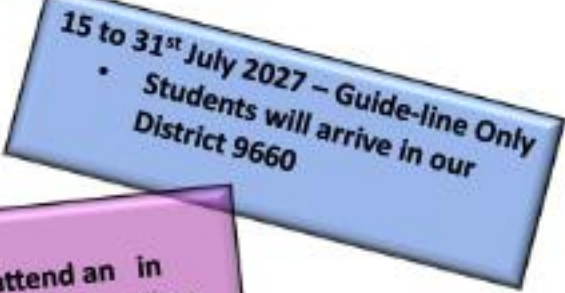
1st April 2027

- 
- Clubs to make first contact with the student they will host

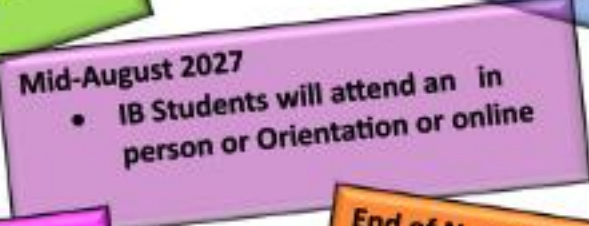
1st May 2027

- 
- All Inbound students are sent the required documents to obtain the student 500 visa

15 to 31st July 2027 – Guide-line Only

- 
- Students will arrive in our District 9660

Mid-August 2027

- 
- IB Students will attend an in person or Orientation or online

11th & 12th September 2027

- 
- 1st Briefing weekend
 - Students will meet our 2028 Outbound Students

End of November 2027

- 
- 2nd Briefing weekend

May 2028

- 
- IB Students Safari begins

15th June to 15 July 2027

- 
- IB Students return home from exchange



CONTENT GUIDE LINES

Hi Everyone,

Just a quick reminder that your reports & media must fit within two A4 pages in total. Any more than 11 photos will be converted into a PowerPoint video. Please put your name at the top of your report so we're not left playing 'Guess Who'.

Many Thanks
Michelle & Adam (the Editors)

Yepper Heyzine navigation

Table of contents

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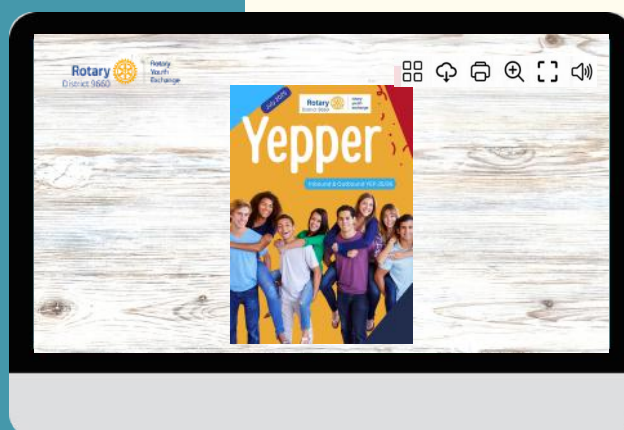
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Report from the Committee

Muddy Boots and New Friends: Our First Briefing Weekend at Bonville

From 11 to 13 September, the Coffs Coast Adventure Centre at Bonville was full of accents, laughter and (by Saturday afternoon) quite a lot of mud. Our first Briefing Weekend brought together the inbound students we are hosting from Finland, Germany, Denmark, Spain, Argentina, Brazil, France, the Czech Republic and Japan, and the Australian students who will head overseas in January 2027.

For many of our inbounds, it was the first time they had met each other since arriving in Australia. You could see the relief on their faces as they swapped stories with people who understand what it's like to start again in a new country, a new school and a new family. For our outbounds, it was a chance to hear first-hand what the year ahead will really feel like, from the excitement of the first week to the quiet moments of missing home.

The ice broke quickly on Friday night with a round of introductions and games. By Saturday morning everyone was ready to learn. Our ROTEX members, past exchange students who know the journey well, shared their experiences. Then the students worked through a series of workshops covering:

program expectations and the Rules (our "A's, B's, C's and D's")

cultural differences and settling in with host families

wellness, homesickness, depression and anxiety

youth protection and schooling

Aussie beach safety and travel guidelines

monthly reporting and writing for the YEPPER

The outbounds also got measured for their famous blazers. They'll soon be covered in badges from around the world! The afternoon was all about adventure. Students worked together on the Puzzle Course and then took on the Commando Course, a mud-run style challenge that left everyone dirty, exhausted and grinning. There's nothing like crawling through mud together to turn strangers into friends.

After dinner on Saturday, the dining hall turned into a celebration. Students played cards, picked up instruments and sang together. The night finished with everyone sharing dances from their home countries, then following the moves of Just Dance until they had no energy left. On Sunday, outbound parents and guardians joined us. District Governor Di Hall welcomed them, and families talked through visas, passports, insurance and preparation. Small group chats then gave everyone time to ask questions and share ideas.

We left Bonville with full hearts, tired legs and a group of young ambassadors who are already looking out for each other. Thank you to our committee, ROTEX, the camp staff and every student who made the weekend so special. We can't wait for the next one



We ♥ our
Volunteers



INBOUND

Annika Rajaniemi
August Buergers
Eduardo Siqueira de Medeiros Junior
Gabriella Buchvaldt
Gadea Maroto Vivar
Helene Schmorl
Juliette Poncelet
Maria Andrade Pagnozzi Maruchi
Salome Peterkova
Tiago Zito
Yusei Ueda



OUTBOUND

Adelaide Doherty
Zoey Hurinui
Saskia Iredale
Daniel Mawbey
Draygan Milne
Chloe Mini
Sophie O'Sullivan
Sophie Radford
Maya Sanghi
Yulanda Thompsen
Izabella Van Der Merwe
Zweli Vockler

STEP

Tessa Fahnile
Martha Schenkel



	Brazil		Finland
	Argentina		Denmark
	Mexico		Norway
	Germany		Sweden
	France		Belgium
	Czech Republic		Italy
	Slovakia		Japan
	Spain		
	Switzerland	District 9660	

This list is the current country choices.

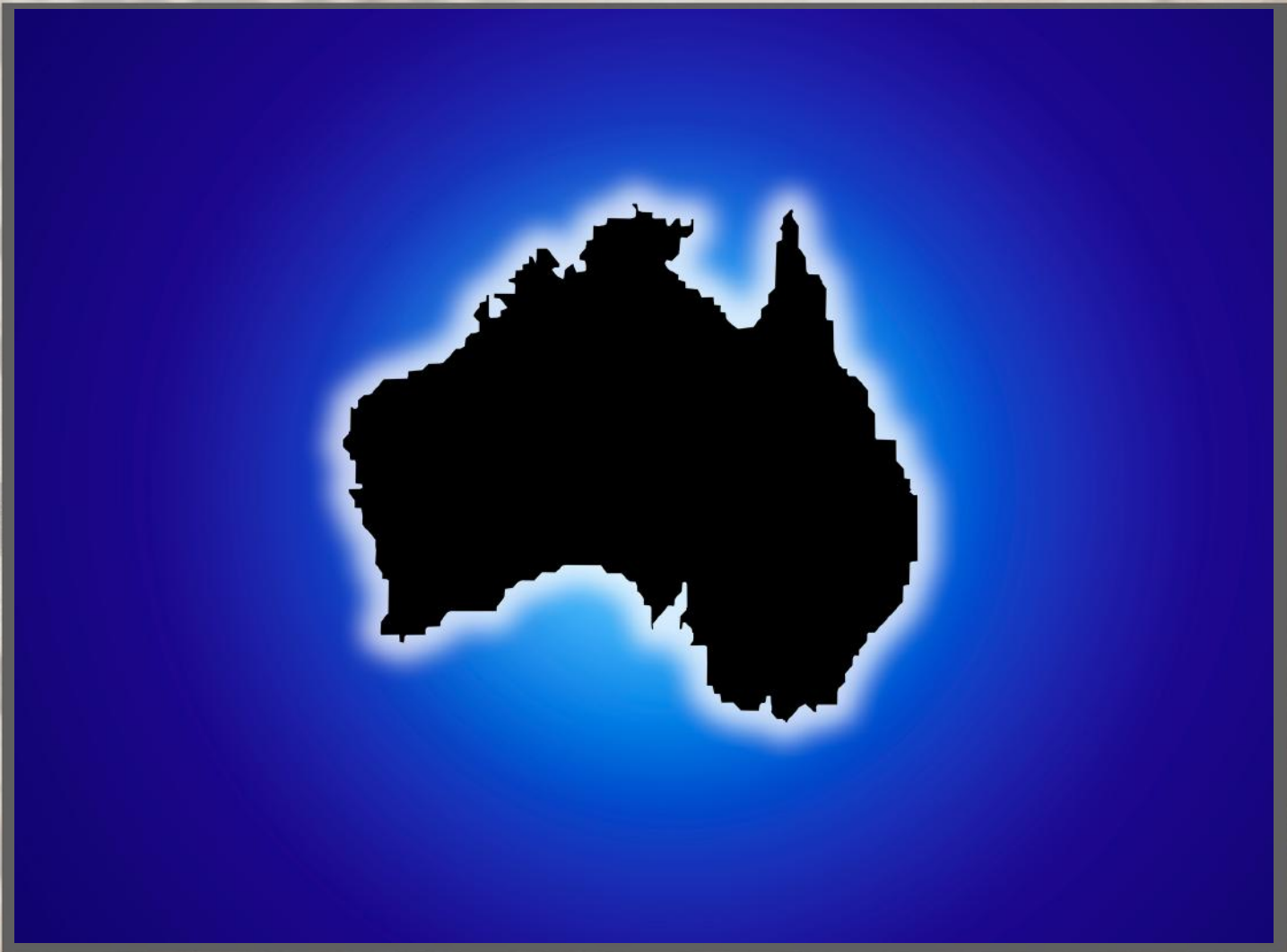
However we are always adding partners if and when we find them.

Remember the first choice is not always the country you will be allocated.

Rotary Youth Exchange is a valuable, personal growth experience



Inbound





Tessa Fahnle



**District 9660
Rotary Club of Narribri**

STEP

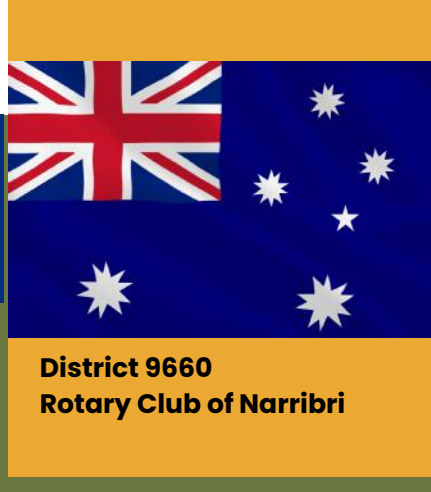
Yepper Report – August – Tessa Faehnle

I was on the Tropical Trek at the beginning of this month. It was really fun to experience the tropical side of Australia and meet other exchange students. The Great Barrier Reef is beautiful and unique, and I am very happy that I could see its beauty with my own eyes. We also went to White Heaven Beach, and I understand completely why it is the most beautiful beach on earth.

On Saturday morning, the weekend after the trip, Beth took me to the show in Wee waa. Bella took me to the footy game of the boys in the afternoon and on the next day, she and her mother went with me on a trip to the mountains nearby. It was so cool! We went to the Glacial and the Sawn Rocks. On Thursday was MADD night at my school and I sang Walking on Sunshine. I had a lot of fun and got a lot of very nice compliments for my voice afterwards, which was kind of overwhelming.

Because Holly turned seventeen the next day, we went to Newcastle to visit her family and watch a rugby game. I started to enjoy watching it. It is such an aggressive but cool sport. We went to one of Holly's games on Friday and on our way there we saw the moon rise and it looked so huge. Holly's parents took me around to see Australia's Telescopes, Yarrie Lake and Pilliga Poetry on Saturday and Sunday. It was very interesting and fun!







Tessa Fahnile



**District 9660
Rotary Club of Narribri**

STEP

Yepper Report – September

I hang out with Elizabeth on the 2nd of September to bake Lemon-Cupcakes. They were delicious and her house is nice. My host family went with me again to Yari Lake on the weekend to have a BBQ with the family.

The next weekend was the Briefing weekend in Coffs harbour. It was very nice to talk to other exchange students from all over the world. We played games, danced and sang together.

I went with my host family to Dubbo the weekend afterward. We went to the Zoo, the old jail and the cave. I made a lot of new friends and laughed a lot with them. I am very grateful that I could do this exchange because it made me realize a few things for example that I am grateful for my friends and for speaking more than one language!
Many thanks





Martha Schenkel



District 9660
Rotary Club of Dorrigo

STEP

Third Australian Report

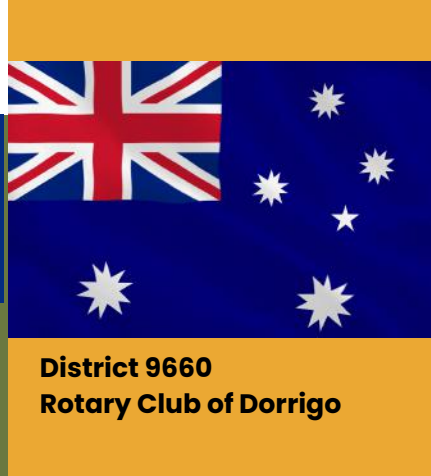
Since I'm only doing a three-month exchange, this month was my last one here in Australia. Even so, I experienced so many great new things and saw so much.

On weekends, my host sister and I usually went to the beach whenever the weather was good. I also went to a high-ropes course and paddleboarding at a lake with my whole host family. Apart from that, I've been shown a lot of the local area; for example, last week my two host parents and I went for a bushwalk in Ebor, a place not far from where we live.

During the week, I'm always at school, but there was a social at the beginning of the month—my very first social ever. We danced and sang, and it was really fun. Last week was my final week of school here, and it was really sad. On

Thursday, the Year 12 graduation event took place, and I was able to help out with the food. Since I've become close with the Year 12 students during my three months here, it was really nice to see everyone wearing beautiful dresses and suits and just looking happy. After the formal dinner with the students' families and friends, there was an after-party, which was also a lot of fun.

On Friday, I had to say goodbye to people who had become very dear to me, like my math teacher. Even though school was boring sometimes, I'm so grateful for everyone I met there and for those who tried to make the experience truly special for me. During my last few days here, my host family and I are planning to go surfing and also visit a platypus farm, something I am really looking forward to. Now I only have a few days left here, and I can definitely say that my English has improved. I've become much more confident speaking English, and I'm very grateful for that. Even though I missed my friends and family back home, the time here flew by way too fast, and I don't even want to go back to Germany.



**District 9660
Rotary Club of Dorrig**

STEP





**District 1385
Rotary Club Tuira (Oulu)**



Annika Rajaniemi



**District 9660
Rotary Club of East
Maitland**

Annika Rajaniemi - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

School is going good, I understand what the teachers are saying better now, even though I still sometimes struggle to grasp everything. People are friendly to me, and the teachers remain understanding when I don't always know what I am supposed to do. I have friends at school who with I spend time. I wrote a poem in English. I have already taken my first exams, it was challenging, but I was allowed to use a translator, which helped a lot.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

Earlier this month, I visited the Newcastle Art Gallery with my host parents and their friends. I have First Briefing Weekend, where we discussed about important topics such as rules and homesickness and things that we needed to know and remember. One of the activities was a survivor course where we worked in groups on different tasks for example, we had to balance a plank we were standing on so it wouldn't touch the ground, and try to catch as many balls as possible in a bucket by moving it to the end of a pipe where the balls rolled out. We also did a mud run challenge in groups, which involved things like walking through a mud pit and climbing and crawling through tractor tires. In the evening, we played Just Dance, sang together, and played board games.

Travel

I travelled to Newcastle to visit the art museum and to Bonville for the First Briefing weekend.

Contact with family back home

I talk to my parents every week, sometimes they send photos of what Finland looks like right now. We talk about how I am doing and what I plan to do there. I also talk to my friends in Finland at least once a week, I tell them how my exchange is going, and they share a bit about what is happening in their life.

Highlights

I had the opportunity to tell ninth graders from my former school what it is like to be on an exchange student and to share the story of why I choose to do exchange year. I also gave a presentation about Finland and myself to my host Rotary Club. I went to the theater with Kim and Josh who are members of my host club. I play boardgames and card games, and my friends teach me a new card game.

Language development

I have noticed that speaking English is starting to feel a bit more fluent, and I have learn new words, too. I understand better than I did at the beginning. although I still do not catch everything immediately if people speak really fast.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

I felt a little bit homesick, but not too much, I have missed my friends the most, but talking to them has helped me get past that. Also conversations with my parents have helped keep the homesickness from becoming overwhelming.



District 1385
Rotary Club Tuira (Oulu)



Annika Rajaniemi



District 9660
Rotary Club of East
Maitland





District 1842
**Rotary Club Gauting-
 Wuermtal**



August Buergers



District 9660
Rotary Clubs of Quirindi

August Buergers - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

In school, I understand almost everything and I can already participate very well in all subjects. In the last week before the holidays, the year twelve had their last week of school, and because of that, they had a big social which the whole school was invited to. It was really fun, and most of my friends also went there.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

In the beginning of the month, we had the first breathing weekend, which was really fun. We met the other Inbounds, whom we only knew from a few texts on WhatsApp. And we met the Outbounds, whom we hadn't met yet; they're all very nice. After the weekend, I stayed in Coffs Harbour for another day with the family of one of the Outbounds, who will be my third host family. I went to the beach with them and had my first swim in the Pacific. On the day we drove back, we saw many Australian animals that I'd never seen before, for example, a blue-tongued lizard, a water dragon, an eagle, and a wallaroo. I found many friends in Quirindi, and one group of five really good friends, with whom I'm sitting in the school breaks.

Travel

This month I travelled to Coffs Harbour for the Rotary breathing weekend, to Newcastle for to weekends with my This month I travelled to Coffs Harbour for the Rotary breathing weekend, and to Newcastle for weekends with my host family and to Sydney for one day to watch a rugby game.

Contact with family back home

I didn't have very much contact with my family, but I had a call every few days with my parents, and I always sent pictures with a text message into our big family group chat, if I did something special that day.

Highlights

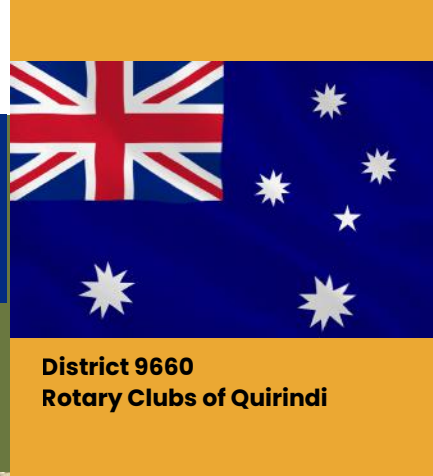
For my highlights this month, I don't really know what to choose, as I did so many great things. But the breathing weekend was definitely one of them. I took a surfing lesson in Newcastle with Eduardo, which was great fun. I finally learned to do turns on the surfboard. And I also went to the Rugby semi-final, for Newcastle Knights, with my host family. Where they won against the Panthers, and got to the grand final.

Language development

I feel like my language is improving every day, there are less words I don't understand, and no difficulty with understanding fast speakers.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

This month hasn't presented any significant challenges or difficulties. I only encountered a few unfamiliar words but simply asked for clarification.



District 1842
Rotary Club Gauting-
Wuermtal

District 9660
Rotary Clubs of Quirindi





District 4760
Rotary Club of Patos de
Minas-Guaratinga



Eduardo Siqueira
de Medeiros Junior



District 9660
Rotary Club of
Newcastle Enterprise

Eduardo - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

School was good, I met more people and learnt more! I also had my year 11 final exams, it was hard because it was all the year content but I did my best and it was really nice to have those experience! My relationship with my Rotary club it's very nice, they are always interested in what I am doing and asking about my experiences (which is lovely) and this month we had a barbecue and a meeting in a pub!

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

This month I had lots of nice activities. We had our fist exchange students camp, where we met all the inbounds and outbounds. It was fun we had some minigames in the bush and a survival course where we got really dirty! Now I'm in school holidays I had the opportunity to go to the beach with friends really often, we usually play volleyball, soccer and swim and one day we buried 2 friends and made a nice sculpture work. August the exchange student from Germany came to Newcastle and slept in my room, we went to a hike to the beach at 4:00 to see the sunrise it was lovely! We also did other things like going Lake Macquarie Sustainability fair and playing soccer with my neighbors. Another nice place I went was the Newcastle art gallery, Joan took me there and it was amazing to see all that artwork! I had a nice day with friends our family's tree house where we played the guitar and sang! I also made brigadeiro brigadeiro - a Brazilian sweet - for my family and friends and they loved it!

Travel

I went to Sydney twice this month. The first time I went to a Joan's family lunch, and it was very nice to meet her family they were all so nice to me. We also went to the Maritime Museum where I toured a submarine, a war ship and a tall ship and went to a Viking exhibition where I could wear Viking costume! It was a unique experience! The second time i went to Sydney I met Helene (exchange student also from Germany) we had a great time in Manly and Chinatown. Sydney is a gorgeous city and each time I go there I get to know something new.

Contact with family back home

Sometimes I call my parents or friends, it's always nice to talk to them, share some of my experiences and hear what's happening back in Brazil.

Highlights

The highlight of the months was definitely my surf lessons. I had 2, August came in the first one, and my friend Theo (who's is also an exchange student from Germany - not from rotary though) is going with me to all of them! I bought a surfboard and I intend to practice a lot next month

Language development

I think my English has improved and I'm always learning new Aussie slang, what is great! I'm having a ripper of a time 😄

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

I don't think I had a big problem that I can remember. Of course we have some in our day to day life but not anything special.



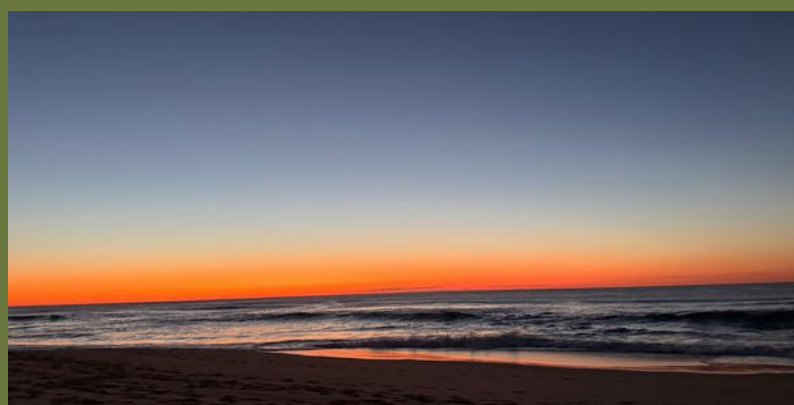
District 4760
Rotary Club of Patos de
Minas-Guaratinga



Eduardo Siqueira
de Medeiros Junior



District 9660
Rotary Club of
Newcastle Enterprise





**District 1461
Rotary Club of
Christiansfeld**



Gabriella Buchvaldt



**District 9660
Rotary Club of Mudgee
Sunrise & Port West**

Gabriella Schlesinger Buchvaldt - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

School has been good and a bit hard this month. We have gotten assessment tasks in all subjects which definitely has been a challenge, mainly because of the wording which is really advanced in assessments and also the level that they are. All of my classes are advanced/extension were most of my classmates struggles, I also have to complete them in my second language. My teachers have been extremely nice and supportive about my struggles helping me out and making them more understandable and actually durable, resulting in me getting really good results which I am super proud of. It feels like a huge win, and I'm very grateful of their help and support. Math has probably been the biggest struggle and my teacher suggested tutoring, which I got upset and disappointed in myself for, because at home it's my strongest subject, but when I went to the tutoring I realized how many other children that was also there and that my teacher is just offering me extra help to make math a bit easier for me - which I am now super grateful for.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

September had a very exciting event planned, on the 11-13th me and my fellow exchange students here in Australia went to Bonville for the introcamp with Rotary. It was super nice meeting all of the other exchange students, because it's nice to talk and relate with other youths that are in the same situation as you. It was also really nice but kind of weird meeting the future outbounds, talking with them about your home country and hearing about their expectations for their exchange. This made me think of how I was in their place just a few months ago, it made me realize that I'm actually during my exchange year and it's no longer just a conversation starter and something I'm looking forward to. It made me think of all my expectations and my excitement before leaving, but also how good of a time I'm having right now, but most of all how fast time goes by, I'm already 2 months in my exchange and its been half a year since I was at training camp back in Denmark. It feels so surreal. During the camp I had my birthday, I was nervous about my birthday because I was not only away from home and my family I was also away from my amazing host club and host family. I had an amazing day, and it's definitely an unforgettable birthday. On the camp we did lots of fun activities such as mud-run, survivor teambuilding (not so much survivor, just really fun challenges) and lots of important useful information.



**District 1461
Rotary Club of
Christiansfeld**



Gabriella Buchvaldt



**District 9660
Rotary Club of Mudgee
Sunrise & Port West**

Travel

This Friday school holidays started, my host family and I got in the car this Sunday and left for Canberra where we spent the afternoon at Questacon, then we went to an Airbnb where we spent the night. The day after we went to a shopping centre, and my host brothers to a trampoline park, we had some nice hours there and then we continued the road trip to Culburra Beach where we'll spend the week's time.

Contact with family back home

I haven't talked much with my family this month, we have been texting and sending some pictures to catch up, but we have only called on my birthday and yesterday. Which is also okay. We miss each other but that's just because we care about each other, All the things I've done this month has kind of filled my time out and made me exhausted most of the time, so maybe next month I'll remember to call home and let them know I'm living and thriving.

Highlights

The two major highlights of this month is definitely my friends birthday party, where most of my friends went, it was super nice hanging out with everyone at the same time, giving a better opportunity to talk and have fun all at once. The other highlight is the colour-run that we did at my high school for the year 12's rainbow day, I have never seen or tried a colour-run before, so this was super fun to try.

Language development

I wouldn't say my language has developed much this month, other than using more Aussie slang, maybe gotten a bit more of an accent, and changing or thinking more about some of my word choices.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

A big difficulty I've overcome is the assessment tasks at school, and I am really proud of how I adapted to them, especially since most of them were extremely challenging for me.



District 2201
Rotary Club of Burgos
Evolución



Gadea Maroto Vivar



District 9660
Rotary Club of Gloucester

Gadea - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

I've been at the school for just over two weeks, and everyone has welcomed me really well from the start. I have a group of girlfriends, but I get along with almost everyone. During these two weeks, the Year 11s were taking their end-of-year exams, so I spent more time with students from other year groups and was able to meet more people. This past week featured games, sports, and fancy dress, as it was the final week of the term and the Year 12 graduation took place.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

This month, I started helping Sam with work. The first weekend, I went to watch a rugby match and attend a concert. Then came the Rotary camp, where I met the other exchange students; I had a great time with them and with the outbound students as well. The following weekend, I went to Foster with a friend for the day; they showed me the beach—which was beautiful—and afterwards, we went to watch the girls' rugby final, which they won. I've met up with my classmates several times. The other day, I met up with some of the outbound students in Newcastle, and we spent the day at the beach.

Travel

I haven't traveled much so far. I went to Foster the other day, but we mostly spent time at the shopping mall; we only made a quick stop to see the beach. I also went to Newcastle, where I met up with some Inbounds and other people, and we spent the day at the beach. And then there was the time I went to the Rotary camp.

Contact with family back home

I speak to my family in Spain every now and then; I call my parents and my sister once or twice a week, depending on the week. I talk to my friends too, though I don't usually call them. For the moment, I don't feel like I miss them all that much, nor do I feel the need to speak with them any more often.

Highlights

The highlight of this month has been the time I've spent with my friends here—whether going to the river, hanging out at their homes, or watching rugby. I've also really enjoyed getting to know my fellow Rotary members. Furthermore, I've loved the experience of going to class; since these are my first few weeks, everything has been much more fun, and I've had more freedom. I've also kept going to Rotary; everyone is lovely, and I've already given my presentation.



**District 2201
Rotary Club of Burgos
Evolución**

**District 9660
Rotary Club of Gloucester**

Language development

I feel like I'm gradually improving my English. I'm becoming more comfortable and picking up more vocabulary. I try to use the new words I learn so I can remember them better and get used to using them. It's true that I sometimes still struggle to explain complex things, but overall, I feel like I've improved a bit.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

At first, I was quite bored while they had to take their exams because I had nothing to do, but later I made more friends, which meant I didn't spend so many hours alone waiting for them to finish. They showed me around the school properly, and that helped me fit in better. Sometimes the language is a problem too, but they are very nice to me and don't mind explaining things to me again more slowly.





District 1890
Rotary Club Altes Land-
Jork



Helene Schmorl



District 9660
Rotary Club of Walcha

helene auguste schmorl - 2026-08

School life, social progress and activities

This month, I had my first presentation at Rotary, where I introduced myself and represented Germany. I was a little nervous, but it was a great experience to speak in front of everyone. I also went to church with my host family, where we made Father's Day presents. I have also started to feel more comfortable in my new environment and with meeting new people.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

I did many different activities this month and met lots of new people. One of my highlights was going horse riding for the first time with my friend Georgie. At first, I was a little nervous because I had never ridden a horse before, but I got a good introduction and felt very safe. While riding, I saw my first kangaroos, which was an amazing experience. We also rode up a mountain and had a beautiful view before watching the sunset on our way back. Another big part of this month was a Rotary weekend with other Inbounds and Outbounds. We got to know each other better and did different activities together. We took part in a survival course where we had to work as a team, and we even came first. Afterwards, we did a command course and the Mud Mile, which was a lot of fun. I also met some new people through my host family and spent time with friends.

Travel

This month, I travelled to Sawtell with Aurora and James to see the beach. We also went back to the beach after the Rotary weekend and put our feet in the water. At the end of the month, I travelled to Sydney, which was something I was really looking forward to. I am excited to see more of Australia and experience life in a big Australian city. (Sydney is going to be in the next Report.)

Contact with family back home

I sometimes call my family when I have a problem or when I am bored and just want to talk to them. Even though I am far away from home, it is nice to know that I can always talk to my family when I need them. I also enjoy telling them about the things I experience in Australia.

Highlights

There were many highlights this month. Seeing my first kangaroos while horse riding was definitely one of them. The beautiful view from the mountain and the sunset were also unforgettable. Another highlight was the Rotary weekend because I met many other exchange students and we had a lot of fun together.

Language development

I feel like my English has improved since I arrived in Australia. I am getting better at understanding the Australian accent and especially the slang. I have also learned some Australian abbreviations and expressions that I did not know before. I feel more comfortable speaking English now, and everyday conversations are becoming easier for me.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

none



District 1890
Rotary Club Altes Land-
Jork

District 9660
Rotary Club of Walcha





District 1760
Rotary Club of Marseille
Saint-Michel

District 9660
Rotary Club of Gunnedah
West & Woolgoolga

JJuliette - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

Starting high school in Australia was a great experience. I was able to choose my elective subjects and quickly made new friends, which helped me integrate. During the high school exam week (which I didn't have to take), I had the wonderful opportunity to spend a week with my host mother at her primary school in a Year 1 classroom. The children were adorable and very welcoming. It was a unique and enriching experience that taught me a lot about primary education and young children in Australia.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

I recently attended my host Rotary Club meeting, where I had the opportunity to give a presentation about myself and my home country. During the meeting, we also did the traditional banner exchange between my home club and my host club, which was a very special moment. Early on, I went to the Tamworth Show with my host sister and her friends. It was my very first time experiencing Australian rodeo events, including steer wrestling and bronc riding! It was super cool and gave me an exciting taste of local culture. I also attended the Rotary Orientation Weekend, where I met exchange students from all over the world. It was amazing to connect with people who are going through the exact same journey as me. We bonded, sang, danced, and created memories that I know will last for a long time. More recently, I went on a camp where I learned how to ride horses! I did my very first jump and cantered for the first time. I also met wonderful people and had an unforgettable time.

Travel

Alongside the Tamworth Show and the Rotary weekend, I went on a fishing trip with my host family and friends. It was a great opportunity to explore the surrounding area, relax outdoors, and enjoy the beautiful Australian nature.

Contact with family back home

I keep in regular contact with my family and friends back home to share all my exciting updates.

Highlights

Discovering Australian rodeo events (Steer Wrestling and Bronc riding) at the Tamworth Show. Meeting exchange students from all around the world at the Rotary Weekend and making lifelong friends. Spending an adorable week helping in a Year 1 classroom at primary school. Learning to ride a horse, making my first jump, and cantering at camp! Fishing with my host family and friends.

Language development

My English is improving every day! Being immersed at school, chatting with my host family, spending time with primary school kids, and hanging out with friends at camps and local events have all helped build my confidence and broaden my vocabulary significantly.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

My English is improving every day! Being immersed at school, chatting with my host family, spending time with primary school kids, and hanging out with friends at camps and local events have all helped build my confidence and broaden my vocabulary significantly.



District 1760
Rotary Club of Marseille
Saint-Michel

District 9660
Rotary Club of Gunnedah
West & Woolgoolga





District 4510
Rotary Club of Dracena



Maria Andrade Pagnozzi Maruchi



District 9660
Rotary Club of Belmont
& Nambucca Valley

MMaria Elisa de Andrade Pagnozzi Maruchi - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

School has been a very interesting and positive experience for me. I have made quite a few friends in different groups and environments, which has been really nice, especially because I have been able to meet people from different places around the region and get to know people with different experiences and personalities. I also feel that I am getting closer to my host family, especially through the little things we discover that we have in common and the moments we share in our daily lives. I still really enjoy dancing with my host sister and going for walks at the beach, which has become one of my favourite activities. I also hope to start learning how to surf soon.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

This month, I also attended the Rotary camp, which was a really fun experience. It was great to meet people from different places, learn about other cultures and talk to other students who are also preparing for their exchanges. During the camp, I participated in many different and fun activities, and one of the most memorable experiences was practically swimming through mud during some of the activities. It was a little chaotic, but really fun, and definitely something I will remember. I have also been making quite a lot of new friends, and I feel that these experiences are helping me meet more people and feel increasingly integrated here.

Travel

I did not go on any trips this month. However, I still had several opportunities to explore new places around my area and participate in activities with my host family, friends and Rotary.

Contact with family back home

I have been trying to find a good balance when communicating with my family in Brazil. I still talk to them, but I try not to communicate with them too often and, most importantly, I try to make sure that these conversations do not interfere with my routine, my experience here or my social life. I think this has been important for me to be truly present in my life in Australia and make the most of my exchange experience.

Highlights

The part that made me happiest this month was realizing that I am getting closer to the people around me. It has been really nice to see myself building new connections, making friendships and creating relationships that go beyond simply knowing people. Little by little, I feel like I am really building a life here and becoming more integrated with my host family, school and community.

Language development

My English still has many things that I need to improve, but I am becoming more and more confident when speaking and communicating. I also feel like my brain is getting increasingly used to the language, especially because I hear English every day. I have been able to understand conversations better and notice new words and expressions more easily. I still have a lot to learn, but I can definitely notice my progress in my everyday life.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

One of the difficulties I faced this month was starting to use public transport more often so that I could go out with my friends, explore new places and have more independence. In Brazil, I hardly ever used buses, so at first I did not really know how the system worked. In fact, one of the first times I used one, I accidentally took the wrong bus and ended up somewhere completely different from where I was supposed to go. After that, I talked to my host family and we found a better way for them to know that I was okay and that I was getting home safely, while still allowing me to have my independence. Little by little, I learned how to use the buses, understand the routes and organise myself better. Now, I really enjoy having the freedom to take a bus to different places, meet my friends and explore new places by myself.



District 4510
Rotary Club of Dracena



Maria Andrade Pagnozzi Maruchi



District 9660
Rotary Club of Belmont
& Nambucca Valley





District 2240
Rotary Club of RC PC



Salome Peterkova



District 9660
Rotary Club of Scone

Salome Peterkov8 - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

It's hard to make friends in school, but I talk to a few people there, so it's fine. In scouts it's easy to make friends, because there are fewer people and they are all very nice. This month I even received the scout scarf in a beautiful ritual. We had a fire afterwards. I wasn't doing the year 11 exams, instead I was doing something like working experience in primary school. It was sometimes fun and sometimes boring, but I enjoyed it. The kids and the teachers were really nice. The kids made me so many goodbye cards, I don't even know how I deserved this. On Mondays basketball I made some shots this month, not many, but I'm happy anyway.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

At the start of the month we had a Rotary camp in Coffs Harbour. It was nice to meet all those people, who are experiencing something similar as I. I really enjoyed the Mud run, it was so fun. And also the Saturday evening, when we were dancing and singing with the guitar was really nice. I left this weekend feeling more safe and comfortable on my exchange, because now I know all the rotary people that are making my exchange real, which I'm very grateful for and all the people who experience it with me. On the way back Vicky took me to see the big gold guitar in Tamworth

Travel

The first weekend we were in Sydney again for my host sister's dance competition. It was really cool. The weekend after Rotary camp I was hiking with scouts in the Towarri National Park. It was really beautiful. It was freezing in the nights, at least now I know I'll pack my warmest socks next time. In the morning I heard kookaburras, but they were in the distance so it wasn't so loud and I also saw some Grass trees, they were really cool.

Contact with family back home

I text with my friend sometimes and sometimes I call my family. But I don't know I have been crazy homesick only once so far. And it was last month when I was sick.

Highlights

This month was so busy and so full of things that I was doing, I'm not even keeping up to write my diary.

Language development

My first family was really nice. I really enjoyed spending time with my little sister. We were baking banana bread together and once I even took her running with me. I hope she wasn't bored too much, but we ran to a playground, so I guess it was our compromise. Last weekend I changed families. My new family is also really nice. They don't live with any kids at the moment but they often meet their grandchildren. They are crazy (as all kids), but it's fun with them. When we visited their house, they let me feed their little cow, it was so cute. My English I believe is slowly improving every day. Just yesterday I learned a new word - rag.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

My exchange is going pretty well, so far I cannot think of many difficulties I needed to overcome.



Salome Peterkova



District 2240
Rotary Club of RC PC

District 9660
Rotary Club of Scone

T





District 4921
Rotary Club of Bariloche
Nuevas Generaciones



Tiago Zito



District 9660
Rotary Club of Port
Maquarie Sunrise

Tiago - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

School is going very well. I still don't understand much, but I already have lots of friends. One of them has invited me to sleep over at his house. They are all very funny. As for the classes, I still find it very difficult to understand the teachers because they speak very fast, but overall, everything is going well.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

The holidays started, and I went camping at South Rocks. On the first day, I went surfing. It is a very peaceful place. One day later, many of my host sister's friends came, and we went swimming a lot and also went stand-up paddleboarding (SUP). I saw many kangaroos. They were everywhere! I got scared a couple of times because I would wake up and there would be one outside the door of the caravan. After that, I went snorkelling with my host mum, and we saw a wobbegong shark. I had seen one a few days earlier, and that time I was really scared. Afterwards, they told me that it is not dangerous. When I saw it closer, it swam very close to us. It was more relaxing to know that it wasn't going to do anything.

Travel

I went to new castle for the birthday of my host brother's cousin who also met my host dad's parents they are a very large family and they are all very good we went to their house to spend my host father's birthday and the next day we went to Newcastle

Contact with family back home

I don't talk much with my host family. It depends; sometimes I talk a lot, and other times, not much.

Highlights

The best part was seeing lots of kangaroos and also sharks. I went with some friends to a hidden place where there were natural rock pools, and it was really beautiful. This was when I went camping during the holidays in South Rocks.

Language development

My English is improving. I still can't have conversations, but I understand much better than before.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

The only thing I find difficult is my English and school. It is very hard for me to understand the teachers because they speak very fast, and I can't understand them. Apart from that, nothing else.



District 4921
Rotary Club of Bariloche
Nuevas Generaciones



Tiago Zito



District 9660
Rotary Club of Port
Maquarie Sunrise





District 2610
Rotary Club of Imizu



Yusei Ueda



District 9660
Rotary Club of Dubbo
South

Yusei Ueda - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

I learned a lot at school this month. Even though there are still many things I don't understand, I was able to complete the Year 11 exit exams with the help of my friends. It was quite tough because the exam covered a wide range of topics and had more written questions than I expected, but I feel like I gave it my absolute best. Even though I've only been here for a little over a month, my first term in Australia has come to an end, and it feels like a long time has already passed since I arrived.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

During the First Briefing Weekend, I met other inbound and outbound students in person for the first time, and we took part in various activities together. After that, I had a great time enjoying the beach in Coffs Harbour with the outbound students I went there with.

Travel

I went to a music concert in Gilgandra with my host family. Listening to music from 12 pm to 8 pm was quite tiring, but it was a great experience to listen to English songs that I usually don't hear. Since I haven't been to many concerts before, I was really surprised by how loud the music was. Also, although it wasn't a trip, I went to watch my host brother's cricket match. Compared to other sports, cricket matches are very long (it took about six hours this time), so the players aren't moving constantly, but I felt it was a pretty tough sport.

Contact with family back home

I usually talk to my family in Japan via video calls about once a week. Our calls usually last for about 30 minutes to an hour. Also, since we share recent photos and videos with each other, I haven't really felt homesick so far. As for my friends back home, we sometimes talk on the phone, but not on a strict schedule. Because everything here is so new and exciting, I never run out of things to talk about. This month, I had to contact my family frequently via messages and calls to ask for advice when my computer broke down, which made me feel as if I were going back and forth between Australia and Japan.

Highlights

This might be something I should have included in the school section, but the school music excursion was definitely the highlight of my month. I stayed in Bourke for three days and visited several schools to perform music. This was the first place I visited outside of Dubbo since coming to Australia, so everything felt very fresh and exciting.

Language development

Recently, I can understand more when people speak to me slowly, but there are still many times when I struggle to catch what they are saying. Because of this, I feel like my vocabulary is still lacking, so I've been taking notes on new words and their meanings whenever I come across something interesting.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

During class, there are times when I cannot understand what is being said because of words I don't know. As a result, even if I can grasp the general idea, I often miss the details. To deal with this, I try to ask my friends for help or look up the unfamiliar words after class to make sure I understand better.

Outbound





**District 9660
Rotary Club of Scone**



Adelaide Doherty



**District 2160
Belgium**

September in Belgium 🇧🇪

This month has been a wonderful month. Although most of my time has been spent at school, I have also had the opportunity to visit different places around Belgium, meet new people, and experience more of Belgian culture.

My first day of September was a Wednesday, and Wednesdays are a little different at school because I finish at 12:30, which is normal for schools in Belgium. After school, I went to Liège and caught up with lots of other exchange students, mostly from Brazil. We ate waffles in front of the cathedral, and it was really nice to see everyone again and catch up on how their exchanges were going. One weekend, I visited Namur and met up with three exchange students from the United States. We had pasta for lunch, went shopping, and, of course, had another waffle! That same day, I also went to my host brother's basketball game, which was really fun to watch and a great way to spend the afternoon.

Another weekend, I visited Maastricht in the Netherlands, which is only about 30 minutes from my house. We ate poke bowls and went shopping. One interesting difference I noticed is that shops in the Netherlands are open on Sundays, unlike in Belgium, so it was a great opportunity to explore the city and do some shopping.

School has also been a little different this year. Some days we have different teachers coming into our classes, while on other days our usual teachers are there, so it has been quite different from my school experience last year. It was also my host brother's birthday this month, so we went out for dinner at a Belgian restaurant in the nearby town of Spa. It was a really nice evening and a great way to celebrate with my host family. One of my favourite experiences this month was going to Walibi with Rotary. It was amazing! I got to meet lots of new people, and I also overcame my fear of roller coasters. I ended up going on all of them, which I never thought I would do! I also had the chance to visit the inside of the cathedral in Liège. It was incredibly beautiful and was really interesting to see from the inside.

During the Fête de Wallonie, I went to the palace with some friends, which was really beautiful. The next day, we went to see Spider-Man, and it only cost €6, which I found surprisingly cheap! I also went shopping in Brussels with the other Australian exchange student. We explored the city and ate some really good ramen. Another highlight was attending a Rotary meeting, where I met some students who had recently returned from their exchanges. They talked about their experiences in Mexico and Argentina. The student who went to Argentina is actually my first host brother, so it was really interesting to hear about his exchange and share our experiences.

For the last few days of the month, I stayed with my first host family and went on my school retreat. It was similar to a school camp and focused on team bonding. It was a really good experience because I got to meet new people from my school and practise my French. My French has definitely improved this month from being at school and being surrounded by French every day. I am slowly becoming more confident speaking and understanding the language, and I am excited to keep improving throughout my exchange. Thank you to District 9660 and District 2160 for giving me these amazing opportunities. I would also like to thank the Rotary Club of Scone for sponsoring me and the Rotary Club of Liège-Sud for hosting me. I am very grateful for everything they have done to make this exchange possible!



District 9660
Rotary Club of Scone



Adelaide Doherty



District 2160
Belgium



This picture is from the video in the Yepper eZine



District 9660
Rotary Club of Sawtell



Saskia Iredale



District 1440
Denmark

Hello, and welcome to report number 9!

Host Family and Home Life

This month has been a challenge. I changed host families for the last time, which was very bittersweet. I have moved a lot closer to school, cutting about an hour off my travel time in the mornings, which is very nice. Moving was very bittersweet, I truly loved my last host family, and will miss them heaps. While I was still there, we spent heaps of time together, playing cards, running around with Bella, losing at Ping Pong and eating dinner together. It was some of the best weeks of my exchange, full of tiny moments that mean so much. After moving, it was another time of new routines, and figuring out yet another family dynamic. My new host family is amazing. They are my first Danish family, so it has been so fun learning about Danish traditions, and everything I have to look forward to. Fredagsslik is big in my new family, so whoever is home is on the couch with a movie on and lollies on the table. A really random thing, but my host family apparently loves to forage for wild fungi, which we did the other day. It was surprisingly fun, and they tasted delicious in the risotto we made with them.

Danish Food

I have eaten so much Danish food this month, which I am so grateful for. Smørrebrød, leverpostej (liver pate), Flødeboller, and promises of so much more. I can report I have successfully gotten my Faxe Kondi addiction under control and down to 2 or 3 a week, which is not great, but better than the once a day from last month. Anyway, I have spoken with my host family, and they are trying to feed me as much traditional Danish food as possible in the next 4 months. My host dad is also the best cook, so makes that feat a little easier.

Language

This month has been crazy for my progress in Danish. I now speak almost entirely Danish at home, all the time, with everyone. I am constantly surrounded by Danish, something I have not experienced before, as I spoke English with at least someone at both my last host families. I called my mum the other day, and the first thing I said was I was so tired from speaking Danish all the time, it was nice to speak English for a bit. Other than that, my Danish has been improving so much everyday, my friends at school have mentioned it too. I have started to think more and more in Danish, and simple Danish has also begun appearing in my dreams!! I haven't had that before, so a very exciting advancement in my language learning. I have also been very consistent with my weekly lessons, which have been amazing in boosting my confidence and vocabulary.

Friends

I have done a lot with my friends, both school and exchange. I felt bad for my host family, I spent 4 out of 5 afternoons out with my friends this last week. It has been really nice though, I have gotten a lot closer to quite a few of my school friends, and some of my exchange friends as well. There is another exchange student in my club, so we hang out every Tuesday before our club meetings, and we are quite close. Unfortunately, the other Australian in my district here has decided to go home early due to some personal reasons, so it was sad to say goodbye, but it gave us a great reason to hang out as a district. We went bowling, and played some laser tag. It was great fun.

Rotary

Rotary has been pretty normal this month. We went on a boat tour at one of our meetings, which was very fun. We have our district conference next weekend, so will update next month. We had the Intro camp for the summer team at the start of this month. It was so fun, and a great way to start off their exchange. I remember being just as nervous in January, so it was nice to be the "wise, experienced" exchange student for a change. Everyone's activities went well, and everyone had a great time. I got to practise my Danish with people that weren't my family and friends, which was so nice. My counselor also took me and the other exchange student in my club to Skagen for the day, which was so nice. It was a bit windy, but it's also Denmark so that's to be expected. We went to the tip, where you can stand in two different seas at the same time which was so cool. It was so nice to spend some more time with Henrik, my counselor, and to see Skagen which was on my Denmark bucket list.

And just like that, September is over. Only 3 more reports before I have to say goodbye to this country and these people that I love so much. Anyway, this month has been bittersweet, busy and Danish filled. Well, I'm off to Berlin with my class, see you all next month!



District 9660
Rotary Club of Sawtell



Saskia Iredale



District 1440
Denmark



This picture is from the video in the Yepper eZine



District 9660
Rotary Club of Dubbo South



Daniel Mawbey



District 1900
Germany

September Report

Not a whole lot happened this month. I did a presentation at school about exchange for everyone interested in doing an exchange, went bowling with the other exchange students, and went to the handball derby.

Yesterday, I rode my bike back to school at 6 p.m. to give a PowerPoint presentation to about 50 people about my country, my exchange, and what it has taught me. I thought it was great that I could use my experience I have gained as an exchange student to help other people decide whether an exchange is right for them and whether or not they would like to come to Australia. I was also glad to share what a Rotary Youth Exchange can do and provide for someone's life. Last week, I went ten-pin bowling with my old host family and the other exchange students in my town, along with their host families. It wasn't exactly a tight competition because some people had never bowled before! I really enjoyed being able to have fun, hang out with the other exchange students, and chat about random things and exchange student stuff. Three weeks ago was the GWD derby, which is when we play against the team from the next town over, only 15 km away. GWD absolutely smashed them. The other team's defence crumbled under GWD's pressure, and we ended up winning by 7 points, which is a big gap for a handball game. It was great to feel the energy in the packed stadium as GWD won their first game of the season especially as it was against their rivals.

This month, I have also really enjoyed having the new exchange student, Mel, around. We hang out often and always have fun. We talk, eat, and study German together, and we're especially close because she is staying with my old host family. Who miss me and always like it when I swing by and say hello.

This month was pretty regular, but lots of people have asked me when I'm leaving and whether I want to leave or stay. This question has stayed on my mind because I struggle to answer it. To me, it seems almost irrelevant because I was always going to stay here for a year, and I never really compared whether I would want to leave or stay.

But I think that, despite enjoying my time here — and I'm sure I will continue to enjoy it all the way to the end — I really miss my family and my dog, and I don't think I could spend any more than a year away from them. Anyway that's all for this month talk again next month, Ich hoffe, du hast einen tollen Tag.



District 9660
Rotary Club of Dubbo South



Daniel Mawbey



District 1900
Germany





District 9660
Rotary Club of Cessnock



Draygan Milne



District 2610
Japan

September in Japan

This month I have been spending a lot of time with my host family, school friends and the new exchange students, and I have had some really good experiences.

One of the places I went with my host family was Noto Airport, which had a Pokémon theme. It was pretty cool seeing all the Pokémon decorations around the airport. I also went to another Pokémon spot that was based around the Love-type Pokémon, which was another fun experience.

I went to one of my exchange friend's school festivals with some of the other new exchange students. It was good to see another Japanese school and experience their school festival together. I have also been to karaoke a few times this month. I went with the new exchange students and also went with some of my school friends. Both were really fun, and it has been a good way to spend time with everyone and get to know them better.

I also showed one of the new exchange students around Kanazawa, which was nice because I got to show them some of the places, I have become familiar with during my exchange. I also visited the Ishikawa Prefectural Library, which was really interesting to see.

School has been going great since starting back from summer break. I have really enjoyed hanging out with my friends and making new friends. I have also been trying some different clubs at school.

I have been going to ESS, Karuta Club and Tea Ceremony Club. ESS stands for English Speaking Society, where students get to practise speaking English. Karuta is an old Japanese card game. You listen to someone reading words or phrases, and then you have to find and grab the card with the exact words that were read. It can get pretty competitive and is harder than it looks.

I have also been going to Tea Ceremony Club, which has been a really interesting experience and something I probably wouldn't have had the opportunity to try back home in Australia.

Overall, I have had a really good month. I am enjoying school, spending time with my friends and getting to experience more things in Japan. I feel like I am fitting in well with my current family and making great friends. I am missing home quite a lot this month too.



District 9660
Rotary Club of Cessnock



Draygan Milne



District 2610
Japan



This picture is from the video in the Yepper eZine



District 9660
Rotary Club of Mudgee
Sunrise



Chloe Mini



District 1760
France

September Report - Chloe Mini

This month I started a new school in Pertuis as a student in Première (the French equivalent of year 11). I was lucky enough to already know a couple of students, two of which have already been on exchange and another who plans on going next year. Starting this school was so much easier than the first time as I now speak French and I already understand how the French school system works. I was also lucky enough to attend classes we don't have in Australia. I chose Art, Maths and Philosophy as my elective and although maths is quite hard in another language and Philosophy uses old French texts that I don't understand much of, it's been really interesting!

The first weekend of September I went to an orientation weekend with all the new inbounds in my district. It was really great to meet everyone and talk to them about what they think of France and the differences they've discovered. As the weekend took place in the city of Avignon, we got to go into 'Le Palais des Papes' which is the largest medieval gothic palace in the world. It's famous for when nine popes decided to move from Rome to France due to political instability. We were given a guided tour in English where we could visit the homes of the monks who lived there in the Middle Ages and were told stories about what was expected of the monks and how they lived.

After the weekend I started my second week of my new school which went really well. I discovered my school actually has a lot of students from other countries! I met two girls from Austria in my art class with the Erasmus exchange program, a girl on exchange from Spain, a boy and a girl from Finland who are at my school for a month and even another Australian called Eva who is in the year below me and is staying in France for three months. It's also been really nice living with Carol since we get along really well and are able to share many new experiences. For example, our host mum Erika found out neither of us have ever eaten rabbit, which is a normal and traditional meat to eat in France, even if it is less common than chicken, beef or pork. So an evening after school, Erika made an absolutely delicious meal of slow cooked rabbit with mash potatoes and plums, and I was extremely surprised by how similar it tasted to chicken.

The second weekend of September, Carol and I went to Aix en Provence with Emiliano, a boy who has just arrived from Mexico. It was a really nice day exploring the city. I already know Aix quite well so it was also really fun showing Emiliano and Carol my favourite parts of the city as well as finding small things I've never seen before. The Sunday we spent with Carol's third host family who consists of Léonie, who just came back from her exchange in Brazil, Ingrid, and Julien who will be Carol's host parents. They took us to a beautiful little village where we ate a traditional soup of the region with Julien's family. That evening, we also got to make gnocchi for the first time! It was delicious and something that I will definitely be making for my family when I'm back in Australia.

The third weekend of September I spent with my host family in Digne who I don't live with but really love. I went to the town of Manosque, where we visited Les Thermes. The next day I went with my host parents (Melanie and Benjamin) and my host sister Honorine to a small village called Moustiers Sainte Marie to explore the shops and do a small walk up to the chapel which is on a mountain. I can't believe how quickly the past 9 months have gone, I can't wait to see what my final three months in France bring!



District 9660
Rotary Club of Mudgee
Sunrise



Chloe Mini



District 1760
France



This picture is from the video in the Yepper eZine



District 9660
Rotary Club of East Maitland



Sophie O'Sullivan



District 1870
Germany

September – Sophie O'Sullivan

The month started with something I had been really looking forward to, spending three days in London with my Nan. Having her come over from Australia and getting to experience London together was honestly incredible, and it is an experience I know we will talk about and remember for the rest of our lives.

We managed to fit an unbelievable amount into just three days. We watched the Changing of the Guards, saw Big Ben multiple times, fed squirrels by hand and spent hours exploring the city. One of the highlights was visiting the Warner Bros. Studio Tour – The Making of Harry Potter. Being able to see the actual sets and props from the films was so cool, and we spent around three hours walking through everything. We also did a lot of shopping, particularly around Carnaby Street, which was full of great shops, including Brandy Melville. We visited Camden Market as well, although I think it is safe to say we may have been slightly scammed there! We also managed to see a West End show, which we bought tickets for only three hours before it started. Despite the last-minute decision, it was amazing, and the acting was incredible. Of course, we also ate some really good food throughout the trip.

I did feel slightly sorry for nan by the end of the trip, though, as she struggled to keep up with me! She ended up stacking it getting off a bus, developed blisters on her feet and even managed to spill her £13 wine at the theatre. Despite all of this, she did an amazing job, and I am so glad we got to experience London together. I was also really impressed by London's public transport. The Underground made it so easy to get from A to B, and I loved how convenient everything was. So as you can imagine I was very disappointed, when I was back in Germany and my returning train from the airport was, of course, late. Despite this, I was happy to arrive home and see my host family again. We celebrated my host mum's birthday with dinner, cake and some of her friends, which was a really nice way to finish my first few days of the month.

September also marked the end of the summer holidays, meaning I returned to school. It was really good to see my friends again and get back into a routine. My school had somehow forgotten about me, however, and had not made me a schedule, so for a while I simply went to whichever classes I wanted! It was actually quite funny and definitely a very relaxed way to start the school year.

Outside of school, I started doing Pilates this month and have been really enjoying it. It is not reformer Pilates like I am used to doing in Australia, but it has still been really good. I have also continued my art class, where I have become much closer with the other students. We are currently making jellyfish lights for a festival in January. Unfortunately, I will not be here for the festival, but I am really happy that I can still contribute a piece that my teacher can display for me.

I have also continued horse riding, and this month I got the opportunity to gallop for the first time. It was SO scary because my host mum neglected to mention that we would be galloping! The horse simply took off and there were definitely a few screams from me. To make the experience even better, the horse eventually decided it had had enough and walked straight out of the arena while I was still on it, before going very close to a tree, so I very quickly became part of the tree. So, thank you Bookie, for the wonderful surprise!

Another highlight this month was the welcome weekend for the new exchange students. It was strange but really exciting to meet so many people who were just beginning their exchanges and were as excited as I was when I first arrived. We played lots of get-to-know-you games, and it was quite funny to realise that I was now one of the "oldies" in the group. We also met some of the rebound students, and I surprisingly became really good friends with a few of them. I loved hearing about their exchange experiences and comparing everything they had learnt and experienced overseas.

Overall, September has been about finding my way back into a routine while still making the most of every opportunity. From travelling around London with my Nan to returning to school, starting Pilates, continuing art and riding, and meeting so many new people through Rotary, it has been another month full of new experiences I am so grateful for everything this exchange has given me so far, and I cannot wait for what is still to come.



District 9660
Rotary Club of East Maitland



Sophie O'Sullivan



District 1870
Germany





District 9660
Rotary Club of Rutherford
Telarah



Sophie Radford



District 4760
Rotary Club of Bom
Despacho

Sophie Radford - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

School has been pretty chill this month. I have settled into my routine a lot more now and school doesn't feel as overwhelming as it did earlier in my exchange. I spend a lot of time with my friends at school and I'm much more comfortable talking and joking with everyone in Portuguese. I also feel like I understand what is happening in class much more easily now, which has made school a lot less stressful. Other than normal school activities, I haven't had anything major happening this month, so it has mostly just been enjoying having a normal routine.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

This month has been pretty relaxed socially, but I still spent lots of time with my friends. I went to a few birthday parties and other parties, which were always fun and gave me a chance to spend time with people outside of school. I've also continued spending time with the other exchange students, and I have been helping some of the newer exchange students with their Portuguese. It is actually really funny seeing them struggle with things that I remember struggling with at the beginning of my exchange. I haven't had any big Rotary camps or events this month, so it has mostly been smaller social things with friends.

Travel

I didn't travel anywhere this month. After having quite a busy few months with trips and moving around, it was actually nice to have a month where I could just stay in Belo Horizonte and have a more normal routine. I've enjoyed having more time at home, seeing my friends and just doing everyday things without constantly having somewhere to go.

Contact with family back home

I have continued talking to my family and parents regularly throughout the month. I don't call them every day, but we have kept in contact and I usually talk to them when I have time. I feel like homesickness has become much more relaxed for me now, and almost nonexistent. It is still nice to catch up with everyone and hear what is happening in Australia, but I am much more comfortable being away from home now.

Highlights

One of my highlights this month was going to see a live orchestral screening of Central do Brasil with Larissa, one of the other exchange students. It was especially cool because Larissa is from my city in Brazil and she went on exchange to my city in Australia, so we have a pretty close connection through both of our exchanges. Apart from that, some of my favourite parts of the month were the birthday parties and other things I did with my friends. Nothing huge happened this month, but I think having a quieter month and just enjoying normal life in Brazil has been a highlight in itself.

Language development

My Portuguese has improved a LOT this month. I feel like I can now speak Portuguese almost fluently and I am much more comfortable having normal conversations without having to constantly think about every sentence before I say it. I can understand people much more easily, including when people are speaking quickly or using slang. I have also started helping some of the other exchange students learn Portuguese, which has been a good way to practise because I have to explain things that I now use without thinking. It is weird thinking back to the beginning of my exchange when I could barely put a sentence together, because now speaking Portuguese feels much more natural.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

I haven't had any major problems or difficulties this month. Things at home have been good, school has been easy and I feel very settled into my life here now. I think the biggest change has been how comfortable I feel compared to the beginning of my exchange. Homesickness is much less of an issue and I don't feel like I am constantly thinking about Australia anymore. This month has mostly just been a chance to relax and enjoy being here without having to deal with any major problem.



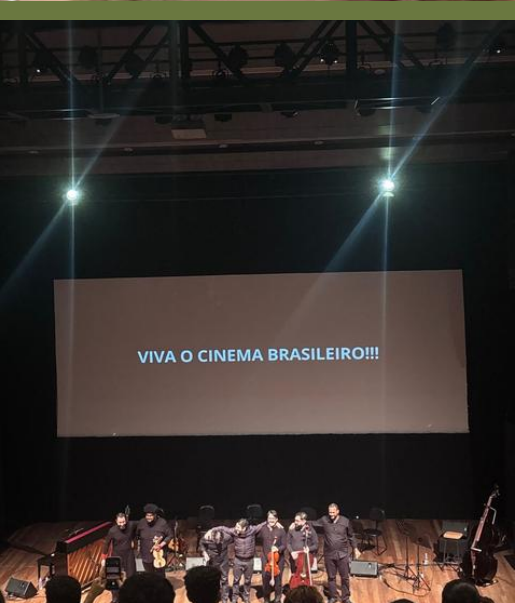
District 9660
Rotary Club of Rutherford
Telarah



Sophie Radford



District 4760
Rotary Club of Bom
Despacho





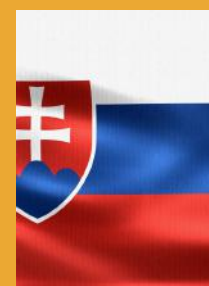
District 9660
Rotary Club of Charlestown



Yulanda Thompson



District 2240
Czech/Slovakia



Yulanda Thompson-
Hosted by Rotary Club of Hradec Králové, District 2240, Czechia
Rotary Club of Charlestown, District 9660, Australia

September

I started school again on the first of September. The first week was a little boring, but it was nice to see everyone again after the long break. During my second week of school, my friend who I met at summer camp invited me to stay with her family for a few days. She lives in Milan, which was one of the places we didn't get to visit during Eurotour.

In Milan, we visited the Duomo, the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II and Via Monte Napoleone which is Milano's luxury fashion street. I thought the Duomo looked like the "less gothic" version of the Cologne cathedral. In the Gallerie, there is a famous tradition believed to bring good luck, when one spins their heel on the mosaic bulls "testicles". I successfully spun on the mosaic.

One day, we were joined by another Italian friend, who also showed me around the city. He knows a lot about Milan's culture and society, so I got to learn more about the city from another locals perspective.

Italy was actually my first choice for my exchange, so I was especially excited to experience what it was like to live with an Italian family, even if it was only for a few days. I learned that Italians love sitting around the dining table and talking for a long time after finishing a meal. I also discovered just how passionate Italians are about food, especially when it comes to the "right" way to prepare pizza and pasta! We spent one of the days in Crema, a small town where my favourite film, "Call Me by Your Name", was filmed. We then took a train from Crema to a small lake, where we spent the afternoon cooling off in the water.

When I returned to Czechia, we had our Rotary Orientation meeting in Kroměříž. I met the new exchange students who had recently arrived in Czechia, and they all seemed excited to begin their exchange year. The other Australians and I gave them some advice on "How to Survive an Exchange Year." I made sure to tell them that homesickness is something that comes and goes, and that sometimes it can feel much stronger than at other times.

One day at school, we went on an excursion, where we visited the last handmade paper factory in Czechia. We also visited a dam. Although I didn't understand very much of what was being said, it was still really interesting to see these places and experience something different from a normal school day.

My Czech teacher has also told everyone in my class, as well as my host family, to only speak Czech with me in the hope that my Czech will improve faster. I think my vocabulary has definitely been growing, although I'm still working on putting sentences together correctly.

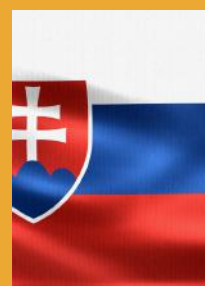
I'm so grateful that I had the opportunity to visit Italy and see my best friend. I know I never would have met her if it weren't for Rotary. Rotary has given me so friendships with people from all over the world, and I think one of the most special parts of xchange is having people to miss — and knowing that there are people all over the world who miss you, too.



District 9660
Rotary Club of Charlestown



Yulanda Thompson



District 2240
Czech/Slovakia





District 9660
Rotary Club of Woolgoolga



Izabella VAN DER Merwe



District 4510
Brazil

Izabella Van Der Merwe - 2026-09

School life, social progress and activities

With my Portuguese improving I've been able to speak Portuguese with my friend at school, so it's so cool to actually be able to get to know them better. I've also been hanging out with the new exchanges a lot as well.

Social activities, Rotary camps and friends

I went to a rotary meeting this month, as well as my friend from a different club's one. Everyone at both the clubs are really nice and welcoming always. My host sister from my first family did her rebound presentation, she went to Germany and it was really cool to hear all the places she travelled and how her exchange was.

Travel

I didn't really travel this month cause just last month we came back from a big trip.

Contact with family back home

I've talked to quite a lot of my friends from Australia this month. It's been nice catching up with them and seeing how they are. But it's really hard for me to keep in contact with people from home because there is a 13 hour time difference for us, so usually I have to stay up until late midnight or wake up really early to talk with family and friends. But I usually am able to call with my family once a month, it was actually really cool this month cause I got on a 3 way call with my parents and brother who are at uni right now. So it was nice to speak with my brother again, cause we don't really get the time to talk much with how busy we are.

Highlights

Cause it was a chill month I would say just hanging out with my friends.

Language development

I'm quite happy with my Portuguese, obviously wish it could be better. But I've been able to hold conversations with my friends and host families, and when I don't know a word I'm able to explain what I'm trying to say. So it's going alright but definitely could have some improvements.

Problems or difficulties encountered and overcome

I had a problem with my third host family, with how the living arrangements did not match with what I felt comfortable with or what rotary allowed. But luckily it is all sorted now. I spoke to my YEO here in Australia, my first host family who organises who's house I go too. So thank you to all of the people who helped me in that situation!



District 9660
Rotary Club of Woolgoolga



Izabella VAN DER Merwe



District 4510
Brazil





District 9660
Rotary Club of Bellingin



Zweli Vockler



District 2202
Spain

Monthly report

Starting the Month: First Spanish Party

This month began with my first proper party in Spain, held in my friend's village. I stayed the night there and had a great time even without drinking alcohol. Almost all the songs were in Spanish, and even though I didn't know most of them, I still danced and sang along to the ones I recognised. It was one of those moments where I realised how much more comfortable I've become in Spanish environments and how easy it is now to enjoy myself even when everything around me is in another language.

Beginning School Again

Shortly after, school started. Surprisingly, it wasn't bad at all. I'm now in the equivalent of Year 11 in Australia, and understanding everything has made classes far less boring. I can follow the lessons, think about what's being discussed, and actually participate but very rarely. The only exception is philosophy, which is still quite difficult, but I'm not too stressed about academics since I'll repeat the year when I return to Australia. For now, I'm focusing on learning, improving my Spanish, and enjoying the experience rather than worrying too much about grades.

Zaragoza Rotary Camp

A week later, I travelled to Zaragoza for my final Rotary camp. This camp also marked the arrival of the new exchange students beginning their year abroad. It felt meaningful to welcome them, talk with them, and share advice that I hope will help them throughout their exchange. I also met some of the new inbounds and reconnected with several Rotarians, which made the weekend feel special and full-circle.

Hiking the Pyrenees and Navarra's Tallest Mountain

The following week, my friend, her brother, and I drove to the French Pyrenees. Before crossing the border, we hiked the tallest mountain in Navarra: La Mesa de los Tres Reyes, or "The Table of the Three Kings." The hike was 17 kilometres, and it definitely took a toll on my legs, but the views along the way and especially at the summit made every step worth it. Some parts of the climb were intimidating because of my fear of heights, but I'm proud of myself for pushing through. In the end, I genuinely enjoyed the challenge and the feeling of accomplishment.

Saying Goodbye to a Friend

Last week, one of my exchange friends from Australia left to go home early. It was sad to see her leave, but I'm grateful for the time we spent together. I'll visit her on the Gold Coast when I return home, so it wasn't a final goodbye.

Changing Host Families

This Tuesday, I moved to my new host family, and I've been loving it. I now have a dog named Taki and a host brother who spent his exchange year in Australia. Both my host parents have been incredibly kind and helpful with my settling in. I've already signed up for a new gym, and I ride my bike there, which has been really enjoyable. I take Taki on walks, and this weekend I'll be making paella with my host mum, which I'm really looking forward to.

Friends and Routine

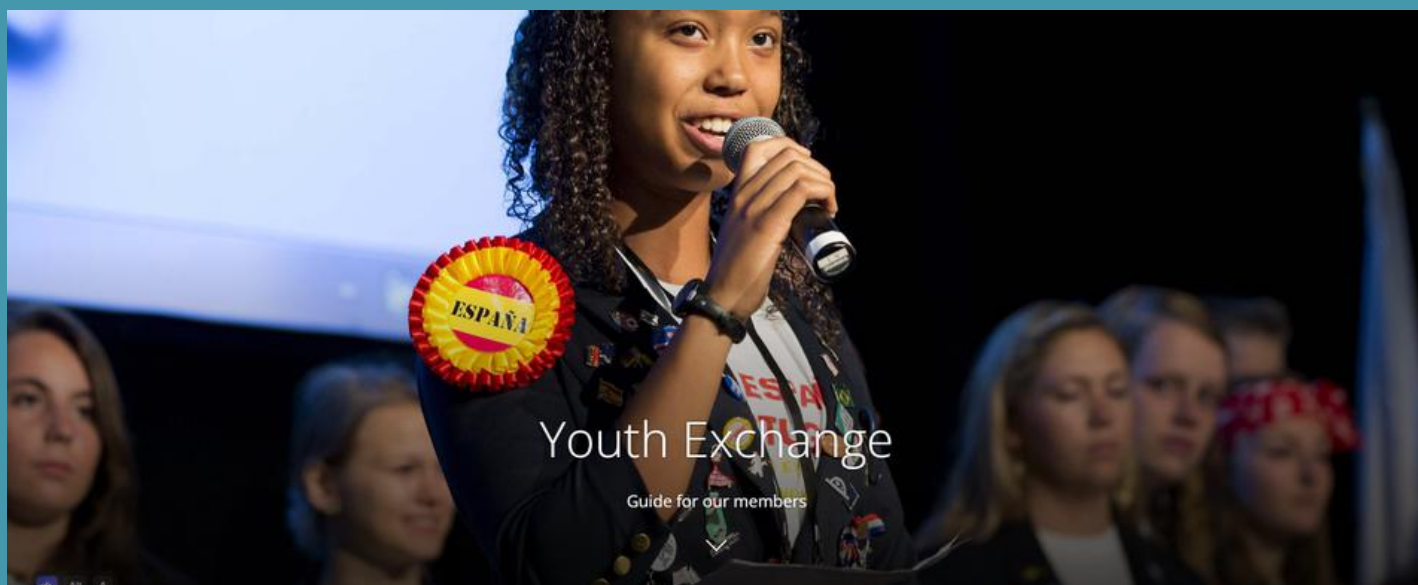
I've been spending time with my friends, but changing gyms means I don't see them every day anymore. Still, we catch up on weekends, and it's been nice having a balance between family, school, gym, and social life.

Spanish Confidence Boost

One of the biggest changes this month is that I no longer speak English to people unless I need help with a difficult word. This shift has massively boosted my confidence and made me feel much more comfortable in daily life. It's a great feeling to realise that Spanish is becoming natural for me.

Final Thoughts

Overall, this month has been full of new experiences—parties, school, camps, mountains, goodbyes, new beginnings, and a lot of personal growth. I feel more settled, more confident, and more connected to life here in Spain than ever before. I would also like to thank Bellingin Rotary Club District 9660 and Pamplona Rotary Club District 2202 for hosting and supporting me throughout this exchange.



BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Seema Tamang was the first outbound youth exchange student from Nepal. "Being blind, I have to admit I was a bit scared at first, as home life in the U.S. was much different than in Nepal. But it did not take long to adapt, and enjoy an amazing experience during which I grew in many ways."

[READ MORE](#)



EXPANDING EDUCATION

Rotarians and Peace Corps volunteers worked together to bring a youth exchange student from Tanzania to Minnesota, USA. Wanzita Ally excelled in school, where she joined the cross-country running team and signed up for an ambitious load of classes, including child psychology, accounting, and biology.

[READ MORE](#)



REWARDING PROJECTS

Rotarians and international exchange students worked together to install solar lights with Navajo in northwest New Mexico, USA. "For me, the Navajo solar lights project was a life-changing experience," says Akos Varga, an exchange student from Hungary. "I was very glad seeing the people's emotions when they first turned their solar lights on. Probably that was the best part!"

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