

Hi, my name is Aine, and I am from Tokyo, Japan.

I came to Australia to study at Centenary Heights State High School for one year program and I am studying in Year 11.



When I first arrived, I tried to make friends with my student mentors and gradually got to know her friends too. I was nervous about talking to people in class, but our kind teachers encouraged my classmates to speak with me. When I shared my feelings of anxiety and loneliness, my friends told me, "It's okay, no worries." Their kindness made me feel comfortable and helped me overcome my fear of speaking.

At the beginning, I often used a translator during classes and in daily life, and I tried to remember the words I looked up. I also used my vocabulary book from Japan to study new words. Speaking with my friends, teachers, and host parents helped me the most, and I enjoyed watching movies in English with subtitles. Studying in Australia has greatly improved my English and communication skills, which are essential for my future career. I have learned how to adapt to new environments and work with people from different background which are the skills that will be valuable for both university and my future career in IT.

Some subjects and exams were very challenging for a student who came to Australia in Year 11 without much background education in an English-speaking country. At first, I couldn't even understand some questions, let alone answer them in English. The school's International Student Program staff communicated with all my teachers, and my assessments were adjusted to make things fair for me. I was also provided with opportunities with tutoring so I can ask questions and seek help from a tutor. This support helped me feel more confident and perform better.

The school dance team was already full by the time I mentioned that I would like to dance, so I couldn't join this year. However, the International Program staff helped me find a dance team outside of school. The school was so generous that I was able to attend the dance lessons for the whole term for free. I performed on many occasions with the dance team in the local community and even participated in the Eisteddfod dance competition. Dancing has always been a passion of mine, so being able to continue it in Australia made me happy.

The school's International Program also organized many excursions to wonderful places in Australia, such as Sea World, the Gold Coast beaches, Lone Pine Sanctuary, and the Australian Outback Spectacular, etc. I volunteered at the school coffee shop, mentored new Japanese students, and joined the Performing Arts excursion to Sydney. All these experiences were amazing, and I enjoyed every one of them. The Sydney trip was especially exciting and gave me unforgettable memories.



At first, I felt disappointed to be assigned to Toowoomba instead of places like Brisbane or the Gold Coast. But now, I am grateful because our school offers many excursions for international students, and I've gained so much cultural understanding from them.

Toowoomba turned out to be much better than I expected. Before coming, I couldn't find much information online, but after arriving, I discovered its beautiful nature and the famous Carnival of Flowers in spring, very friendly local people, which I will never forget in my life.

