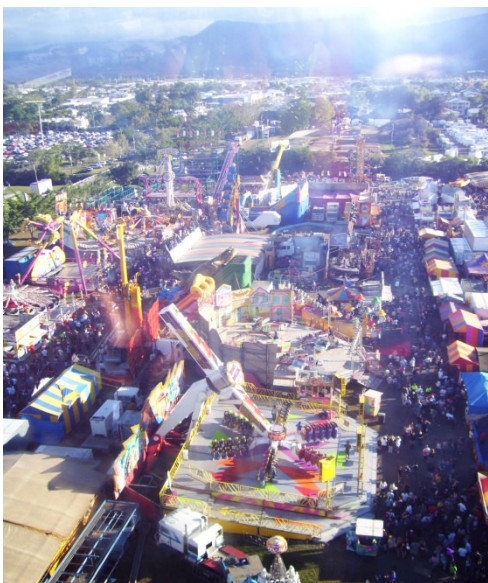


On the 6<sup>th</sup> of July 2008 I landed in Cairns airport and wasn't sure what to expect. I was in a new country, miles from home, surrounded by people I didn't know, but once I met the family I would be staying with for the next 2 months, they made me feel welcome and I knew I had no reason to be nervous.



*A plane coming over Cairns*

I arrived in Australia in the middle of their half term, so I had a week to settle in and see Cairns before I had to go to school. In that week I met a few of Natasha's friends, went shopping, to the beach, saw some of the sights of Cairns, and best of all went to the annual Cairns Show, which was a lot of fun, from the atmosphere, to the show bags to the rides.



*The view of the Cairns Show out of the Ferris wheel*

On my first day of school I must admit that I was little bit nervous, but I overcame that once everyone introduced themselves and they were also very welcoming to me. The school there was different from Cobham Hall in the way that they had to bring break and lunch from home, they ate outside and not inside, all of the classes were outside and not in an enclosed building, the school days were shorter and there was no school on Saturday. School was both fun and educational.



*Sage, Becky and Katelyn at break*

On the weekends I usually went shopping, to the beach or to the occasional party. One weekend I even took part in a competition called 'OptiMinds' that my fellow team mates and I won. While in Cairns I visited Port Douglas, a beautiful beach 2 hours away from Cairns, numerous beaches around Cairns, the Great Barrier Reef, the Cairns Tropical Zoo, where I held koala, snake and a crocodile.



*Natasha and I, snorkelling in the Great Barrier Reef*

I learnt a lot while I was in Australia, not just in school but life lessons that have made me a more independent person and I've made many friends that I hope to meet up with later in life.



*Me at Palm Cove*

A Round Square Exchange is something that you only get one or two opportunities in your life to be a part of, so I encourage anyone that is remotely interested in going on an exchange, conference or service project to take that thought and make it into an action.

By Naomi Ingle