

G'Day mate!

3 months in Australian Outback. That was the deal I made when I took the job opportunity at Augathella, South-West Queensland. After I heard about the job it took in total of 10h to reach the company, get 2 skype calls with them and get the job. Next thing I needed to decide was what kind visa I would apply. In this case I decided that Working Holiday would be the best option for me because

- 1.) It allows me to work for the same employer for 6 months
- 2.) After my internship I can still stay and travel around Australia
- 3.) For Finnish people it is really easy to get, took me 12 h from my online application to "welcome to Australia" e-mail.
- 4.) When working 88 days in rural area post codes (incl. Augathella) in certain industries you'll get your second year visa, which I got from this work. Basically this allows me a second Working Holiday visa year which I can use in any point as long as I arrive to Australia before turning to 31.
- 5.) It's pretty cheap compared to other Visas. When I got my visa it cost around 350 \$ which was about 265 €. Working visa can be easily over 1000 \$ depending on for how long time you want it.

That was the only necessary travel arrangement I need to do before my departure, excluding of course the plane tickets.

I arrived to Sydney on early July to spend couple of days there before my internship would start. During these couple of days I did all the compulsory things, such as getting a local phone card and opening a bank account. Mine is in Commonwealth because I got my super for the same account, extremely easy. Super is an account for your retirement savings. In Australia you need to take care for it by yourself. As foreigner with WH visa this one is pretty good opportunity because it is compulsory for employees to pay 9% of your wage to your Super account and after you leave Australia you'll get all these money back. It took only 4 days for me to get my Commonwealth atm-card and online banking username and password.

Next thing I did was getting my MediCare card. Finland and Australia have joint healthcare system which allows Finnish people almost free basic healthcare and of course emergency care. To get this easily, you need to register yourself for the system. Very fast and efficient meeting, only thing you need with is your passport and visa paper which was sent to you by email. From this meeting I got a recipe which was my temporary card for the first 28 days until I would get my official MediCare card. The MediCare card is free and at least I had to use this twice. With this card it was extremely easy just to march in to any doctor, give my card and get the treatment without paying anything between.

And last important thing to do is to apply your tax file number (TFN). When arriving to Australia, you can do 28 days work without TFN but after these 28 days your tax percentage without TFN is 71%. TFN is easiest to apply online and it takes about 4 weeks to receive it with snail mail. For some reason I never got my via post so I just called there when the 28 days was full and got my number via phone.

After taking care of these compulsory things it was time for a bit of sightseeing in Sydney. In early July it was perfect time for whale watching since these were actually moving straight in front of Sydney's Harbour bridge, Bondi Beach and Manly beach. During the previous day it was all over news how whale had bumped a surfer down from his surf-board on Bondi beach, so as you can imagine I wasn't alone there doing my whale watching. In the end we actually did spotted couple Humpback whales but those were so far away from the beach and without binoculars it wasn't that much to see. There were plenty of whale watching cruises leaving from Darling Harbour but we decided to skip those and enjoy other amusements of Sydney.

Way from Sydney to Augathella was its own adventure. Taxi to airport + plane to Brisbane + 12 h Greyhound bus and finally arrived to Augathella. First glimpse was quite a shock. Now I was literally in the middle of nowhere with couple of wallabies around me. I had googled earlier that there are 200 persons living in Augathella. That's less than I have friends in Facebook. Let the adventure begin!

Our staff house was luckily immediately next to our working place, which was a huge complex including road house, café, restaurant, motel and caravan park next to a popular national park. My job inscription included all kind of odd jobs. One day I was doing inventory, taking stocks and doing orders, next day I was cooking in the café, third one I was solving electricity problems at the Caravan park and on forth day updating and webmastering company's website. Basically I was doing everything and even though it said in the roster that I would certain day work at the roadhouse I might end up to the reception of the motel. Days were long, around 8-10h, but certainly not boring. I especially liked the mornings in July, when it was still middle of winter and couple of minus degrees. The sunsets were absolutely magnificent. I have already seen sunsets in couple of places in the world but I can truly say that the ones in Australian outback are the most beautiful ones.

First couple of days were hilarious since I had no idea what our customers wanted. They had such a harsh accent that I couldn't understand a word of their speech. Luckily with good humor and lots of laugh we got along well. During these three months I made such a great friends there whom I am surely going to meet again. These locals also took me to the local entertainments; roo shooting (Kangaroo shooting) and pigging. Roos, pigs and dingos are real pests in the area and those needs to be killed regularly to keep cattle alive and well. Roo shooting was okay, also killed and skinned my first 2 roos but I strongly object pigging. When pigging, the hunter releases the pigging dogs to catch the pig. These dogs catch the pig, rip it in all direction until the hunter arrives with a knife to cut its throat open. The whole thing was so inhumane and the pig was in so much pain before it was killed that I can't understand why pigs can't be killed as kangaroos, by shooting. On the other hand I have also seen what the pigs can do for a dog or for a calve and this is neither a nice sight. But when in Rome, you do as the Romans. Although when it was time to leave, we did organized sitsit-party as our farewell party. It was quite a show to hear locals singing Helan Går in Australian outback.

It was unbelievable how fast I was taken as the member of the community and got locals picking me up to come to watching local rugby-game or having a bbq. I was even invited for the local rugby

team's end of season gala party. All in all I had so much fun there that it is impossible to tell it all in one report. Completely new country, lifestyle, lots of new friends and more importantly, learned lots about me during this whole process.

For anyone who's thinking an exchange year or internship abroad I tell you; GO FOR IT! These are the experiences that you will remember forever and carry with you always. For me this meant that after Augathella I got to go to Cairns and go scuba diving to Great Barrier Reef and doing a skydive on top of it. Two huge ticks for my bucket list. Not all things you encounter are always just positive and happy but you will grow as a person, see your life in different perspective and travelling always gives more back than you realize. Just take that one step further and you just might find yourself in the places of your dreams. My next steps will lead me to New Zealand.

What is your next step?