

## **The 44th START Program & The 1st START+ Program (Australia)**

For around two weeks from August 25th to September 11th 2017, 20 first-year students participated in the 44th START program and 26 second and third year students participated in the 1st START+ program. They were led by Associate Professor Aaron Claude Sponseller (Graduate School of Education) and two other faculty members to study at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia.

First-year students of the 44th START program studied in groups of ten under the guidance of three supervisors from Intensive English Language Institute (IELI) in the main campus of Flinders University. They studied about the history and culture of Australia and had several lively discussions with local students. Not only did the participants' command of English improve, they also acquired the ability to speak up their opinions assertively. Students who were initially shy and quiet showed remarkable growth and became outspoken by the end of the program. During lectures for local students, participants had a hard time trying to understand the English-taught lessons, but they gathered together after class to confirm what they had just learned to catch up with the class.

Second and third year students of the 1st START+ program attended intensive English language courses in the IELI's City campus located in the central part of the city of Adelaide. They were divided into several classes according to their language proficiencies where they learned presentation techniques, and also took communication classes together with other IELI students from all over the world.

This program is known for its off-campus activities. Apart from attending lectures, students had field trips to the Parliament House and museums in Adelaide City. However, the main event was to experience Australia's rich natural environment with their tour guide in Kangaroo Island for 2 days during the weekend. Unfortunately, some of the activities were cancelled due to the bad weather on the first day. That night, students had fun chatting and trying out the Didgeridoo, a traditional Aboriginal musical instrument. On the second day as the weather got better, participants went to the seaside and squealed with delight when they spotted wild seals on the beach.

On the final day, each group gave a presentation on different themes. It was

amazing that many students diligently carried out interviews with local students and compiled a rich presentation that improved in comparison with the one made before the program, using polished English expressions and presentation skills they had picked up from lectures.

Through this program, participants felt the joy and, at the same time, realized the difficulty of communicating in English. During the program, participants often commented saying “It is difficult to express myself in English. It is frustrating that I can’t get (someone) to understand what I am saying”. Eventually, through the program and conversation with their host families, more and more students began to savor the joy of speaking English. Many students spent a meaningful time with their host families, and said “The homestay experience was totally awesome. I don’t want to go back to Japan.” The relaxed environment at the farewell party on the final day is totally different from the day they first arrived. It is hoped that students will make full use of the invaluable experiences gained through this program, and we wish them all the best in life.



Study tour in Adelaide city



Discussion with local students



Presentation on the final day



Observing wild seals at Kangaroo Island



Lectures with local students (START+ Program)



At IELI City campus (START+ Program)