

Environmental Conservation and Sustainability Studies in Australia

Week 1: Arrival and Program Orientation in Cairns, Queensland, Australia

After making the trans Pacific journey, the group will have a day to settle in to the town of Cairns, a gateway to the Great Barrier Reef and Daintree Rainforest. The group will explore town while engaging in 3-4 days of Orientation, team building activities, establishing a group culture, and setting the foundation for the upcoming journey.

Weeks 2-3: Habitat Restoration, Queensland, Australia

We'll transition to a unique eco reserve and rehabilitation project call SheOak Ridge. Owners Claire and Marcus, scientists and nature lovers, have carefully revitalized this 165-acre site. With ample help from volunteers, they have succeeded in efforts of large-scale reforestation, restoration of wetlands, increasing pollinator populations, and starting a wallaby rehabilitation project. Claire and Marcus are amazing hosts, and will provide a mix of educational activities, work projects (they recently purchased adjacent land once used for sugarcane farming), guided nature walks (sunrise and sunset are the best), and plenty of inspiration as to how we can each participate in environmental stewardship. We'll spend 14 days here, camping in comfortable canvas tents, exploring local swimming holes, cooking communal meals, and learning from our hosts.

Week 4: Marine Conservation, Queensland Coastal Areas, Australia

Departing SheOak Ridge, we'll travel south and meet volunteers and employees of Tangaroa Blue, a marine conservation NGO that is dedicated to the removal and prevention of marine debris. Given Australia's status as an island nation, there is much work to be done here! The group will visit various sites along the way, engaging in beach clean ups with locals, tracking the makeup and origin of debris, and enjoying incredible coastal environments and remote beaches.

Weeks 5-6: Permaculture and Fire Rehabilitation, New South Wales, Australia

Flying from Cairns to Canberra, the capital of Australia, the group will transit to The Crossing, a non-profit land trust established by two amazing sustainability enthusiasts, Dean and Annette. Using permaculture design principles, they have established an educational model that showcases food forests, organic gardens, large-scale solar power infrastructure, natural architecture, reforestation, and care for endemic species of plants and animals. Needless to say, there are always projects and chores that need tended to. In 2019, wildfires ravaged nearby

areas, and many members of nearby communities lost jobs and houses due to the extensive damage caused by the fires. The Crossing is continuing to develop and coordinate volunteer efforts to assist with wildfire recovery on an environmental and community/social level. The group will engage in these efforts as needed.

Week 7: Student Directed Travel

Having established a cohesive group culture, and experiencing many facets of Australian culture, students will collectively shape a week of group travel. While your Overseas Educators will be there to assist and guide, the group will handle budget, logistics, and determine activities for the upcoming week. Starting from The Crossing, the group will have 6 days to explore the southeast region of Australia. Explore the Great Ocean Road? Take some surfing lessons? Whatever the group decides, just make sure to be back to Adelaide in time for your next flight!

Week 8: Scuba/Reflection and Mindfulness

Continuing the adventure after Student Directed Travel, we go full circle round to our starting point of Cairns. The group will participate in a PADI open water diver course, earning a certification after 4 days of theory and practice. After getting comfortable with scuba theory, equipment, and basic pool skills, the group will head out to the ocean and begin exploring the majestic, colorful reefs just off the coast of Cairns. We work with a locally owned and operated dive shop, and the instructors are excited to show you some of their favorite diving spots!

At this point in the journey, our hearts and minds are full with experience, gratitude, and endless possibilities. An important aspect of such intensive learning is the act of reflecting on one's experiences. To this end, the group will travel to a yoga retreat in the heart of the Daintree Rainforest. Within this lush setting, we will practice mindfulness, discuss reintegration into our home culture and environment, and take time for reflection. There will be morning and evening meditations, practice of seva (selfless service) for a couple hours each day, and afternoons will be spent walking local trails and waterways, engaging in reentry curriculum, and soaking up the final few days in the oldest continually surviving rainforest on earth!

****Carpe Diem reserves the right to make changes to the program at any time, and indeed has the responsibility to do so in some instances; changes may be required to provide the best possible experience, protect the safety of participants, or respond to changes in weather or political conditions.***