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Study in Melbourne & Victoria
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Marcella's story of studying in Melbourne

I had always known I would study in Australia. Or to be more exact, I had always known I'd go to the [University of Melbourne](#).

I was in junior high when my older sister went to Melbourne to pursue further studies. After that, I was absolutely sure that I would follow her path. After all, we attended the same international school (IPEKA International Christian School, Jakarta, which uses the New South Wales curriculum), took the same subjects, and my parents had hinted for me to follow in her stead.

Most of my friends dreamed of studying in the States, but I never did. I was that person who decided not to go to America because of the ridiculously long flights required to get there. America was never an option, because I raised the white flag before even considering living the American Dream.

I graduated from high school in December 2009 and applied only to two universities: the University of Melbourne and [Monash University](#). By the following March, I was walking down the streets of Melbourne — one of many international students who had traveled 1,000 miles from home, spoken a different mother-tongue language, and had eaten rice for as long as life itself.

The first few months were not exactly what I expected. There were a lot of lessons to be learned, starting with learning to live independently and managing your own studies while socializing at the same time. Speaking English full-time was also hard, and listening to Australians with their thick accents made it even harder. But I never once regretted my decision to study in Australia, and if I was given the chance to choose again, I would

still choose to go to Melbourne.

Here are some reasons for why I chose Melbourne:

Being independent

This is one of the first and most important lessons you learn when you study overseas. You're forced to become independent, as the comforts of being at home — being pampered by your parents who manage everything for you whenever you ask for it — are no longer there. Studying overseas means doing your own laundry, cooking your own food, cleaning your own apartment and taking care of yourself. These are skills I believe we all need to master in order to grow up and mature, and I personally don't think I could've acquired all these had I continued to live with my parents here in Indonesia.

Good university ranking

The University of Melbourne is ranked 28th in global university rankings. For Psychology (one of the majors I studied), it's ranked 7th. Other universities, such as Monash, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, University of New South Wales, and University of Technology, Sydney, are also great universities whose names people know around the world. I must admit, being the person that I am, I cannot resist the temptation of going to a university with a good name — and it's even better when others recognize it too.

The most livable city in the world

For students, Melbourne is a bit like heaven. It has good public transportation systems and many historical sites, cultural values and exotic lifestyles to explore and enjoy. For coffee lovers, it's even better, because Melbourne is home to some of the best cafes in the world. Plus, its multicultural status makes Melbourne rich in its varieties of food — including Indonesian cuisine to satisfy your Soto Betawi and Martabak cravings. Your social network will expand as you get to know people from all over the world; some of my best friends are from Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines. With the annual Australian Open, international exhibitions and Broadway shows, what more could you ask for?

It's far/near enough from home

It is usually the case that after finishing university, graduates move on to work and maybe meet that special someone before starting a family of their own. Work schedules are harsher than university term schedules, so the frequency of seeing your parents and siblings (if any) dwindles once we become young adults working in the real world. It thus seems that your university experience may be one of the last times you can truly be our parents' son or daughter. With Melbourne being only a six-hour flight away, the distance makes it easier (than the States, for instance) to go home and spend school holidays with your family, while at the same time being far away enough that your daily activities cannot be monitored by your parents. Melbourne isn't as near as Singapore, for example, but being farther than an hour's flight away makes it just inconvenient enough to prevent your parents wanting you to come home every long weekend.

Is there a reason, or a number of reasons, that prove that studying overseas is good? Maybe, maybe not. Choosing a university is a very difficult and important choice, as it means a minimum of three or four years of studying and living there. Look for options, ask for opinions, and only then will you be able to choose wisely. But one thing I do know for sure is that when it comes to choosing a university, whatever your decision, you'll not live to regret it so long as you make the most of your experience.

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