

“My Sydney Business Study Tour Experience”

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I did not know what to expect before flying to Sydney. I had heard great things about it, sure, but nothing really prepares you for a week that ends up changing the way you think.

Growing up, business was never just a concept to me — it was dinner table conversation. Both of my parents are successful and well-known entrepreneurs back home in the Philippines, and what has always made me proud of them is not just what they have built, but why they built it. Their businesses exist to help people. Profit matters, yes, but purpose comes first. That is the version of business I grew up watching, and without realizing it, that became the lens I brought with me to Sydney.



This study tour was not your typical academic trip. From day one, it was clear that this program thinks differently. AI was not something we were warned to avoid or be careful about — it was something we were actively encouraged to use. We were taught to see it as a real, legitimate tool for modern business, which honestly already set this experience apart from anything I had done before. It felt current. It felt relevant. It felt like the real world.

The classes and seminars pushed me more than I expected. There is something about being in a different country, surrounded by people who are just as driven as you are, that makes you show up differently. The mentor sessions were probably what hit me the hardest, though. Listening to people who have actually been through it — the uncertainty, the setbacks, the moments where they had to bet on themselves — made everything feel very real. It was not motivational

fluff. It was honest, and I appreciated that more than anything.

Getting to visit University of New South Wales (UNSW) and University of Technology Sydney (UTS) was something I genuinely did not expect to enjoy as much as I did. Both campuses had completely different vibes and walking through them, I kept thinking about what it would mean to study in a place like that. It opened something up in me that I am still thinking about.



The last day brought the **Pitch Gala**, and nothing quite prepares you for standing in front of a room and pitching an idea you built in under a week. My group — **Alex Pulumbarit, Selene Carcido, and Bettina Pecaña** — came together to develop an app, and AI was a real part of how we got there. We used it to help shape our concept, work through the gaps, and pull the pitch into something we were actually proud of. It was the perfect example of what this tour kept preaching — that AI is not a shortcut; it is a tool, and when you use it well, it shows. Presenting that pitch was nerve-wracking, but it was also one of those moments I will not forget. All the sessions, the late nights talking through ideas, the feedback from mentors — it all led to that stage.

Outside of everything academic, Sydney just got me. Watching the **fireworks light up the Harbour Bridge** is one of those things that sounds cliché until you are actually standing there watching it happen. I remember just going quiet for a moment because it genuinely felt unreal.

The food, the shopping, the random walks through streets we had no map for — all of it added up to something I cannot fully put into words. Sydney is the kind of city that makes you feel like you could belong there if you let it.

And then there were the people, my co-delegates. I came not knowing most of them and left feeling like I had known them for years. There is something about sharing a week like that — the exhaustion, the excitement, the chaos, the laughs — that fast-tracks a kind of friendship that normally takes much longer to build.

I came home with more than photos and receipts. I came home with a clearer picture of the kind of person I want to be and the kind of business I eventually want to build — one that uses every modern tool available, including AI, but never loses sight of the reason it exists in the first place. My parents built something with purpose. Sydney reminded me that so can I.

AI assisted in the writing of this piece, however every experience, thought, and reflection expressed here is entirely and authentically my own.