

Testimonial: Research stay at the University of Melbourne through the DAAD, Bayreuth - Melbourne colloid/polymer network

Mara Klarner

17.October 2016 - 15.February 2017

This four-months research stay in the Abrahams-Robson group for inorganic chemistry at the University of Melbourne was conducted as part of my master's programme at the University of Bayreuth. On the Australian side, Prof. Brendan Abrahams, Anna Ahveninen and Jessica Holmes were involved, whereas on the German side Prof. Rhett Kempe and Dr. Torsten Irrgang took part in this collaboration.

The purpose of this research stay was to start a promising collaboration between the two groups as they exhibit several intersections in their current research interests. There was already a strong network between the groups, so it was a pleasure to become part of this scientific exchange. My practical lab work was about supramolecular chemistry and thus the synthesis and modification of molecular cages. The primary goal was to investigate the binding of lanthanides cations in these cages to exploit for environmental and catalytic applications. We could successfully obtain some early but promising results so that further investigations have to be done in the near future.

The good integration into the local research group gave me the opportunity to gain further insight into crystallisation techniques and single crystal X-ray crystallography, as well as in other suitable analytical methods in supramolecular chemistry. This experience is an outstanding starting point for going on with my master thesis in Prof. Kempe's group at the University of Bayreuth.

Regarding finances, the DAAD provided a fixed travel and monthly allowance to pay flights and accommodation. I had to arrange the accommodation by myself. I was living with a family in Carlton for three months and moved to a shared flat in North Melbourne for my last month in Melbourne. Both places were in very close distance to the campus.

Beside the lab work, I had enough time to explore Melbourne, to make lots of international friends and to enjoy the typical lifestyle of Melbourne. As a very positive effect I improved my English skills a lot, not only regarding scientific topics but also in daily conversations. In the end, I spent six months in Australia and had the chance to fly to the Ayers Rock and travel along the east coast.