Our Story

Once we saw that we had a chance of adopting kangaroos, we immediately decided to take part in the competition. Having such an exotic animal would be a completely new and unique experience. What we did not know was that participating in the competition would lead to togetherness and amity. We would not have gained new knowledge without our hope and love for animals. We developed a strong interest in learning about Australia, its culture and wildlife.

We extensively prepared for the first challenge, so it was a surprise that we only had to write one word in response. Nevertheless, our additional knowledge was not in vain. We were keen to hear about the Floriade festival. Enchanted by it, we fantasised about visiting Australia to experience the celebration of nature and its ornaments of various colours, scents and flavours. That is also how we found a perfect name for our team - Lilly pillies, an Australian evergreen cherry tree. We, as the children of nature, love the idea of celebrating spring.

Facing the second challenge, we learned about the numerous activities in the metropolis of Canberra. Of course, we won’t be sipping wine at the well-known Lerida Estate just yet, but the galleries and cultural sights would be pleasant to visit. Feasting on gourmet cuisine in a number of dining precincts and celebrating the city’s festivals are the best ways for our youthful, lively souls to explore the city. This challenge prepared us for our future adventures through Canberra. But other than Canberra, we have learned that Australia is full of cities rich in sights and cultural life, which, along with the beautiful nature scenery, is truly a blessing.

As big animal lovers, we enjoyed learning about the Taronga Zoo Sydney. We even downloaded the official zoo app to plan a trip there. Now we really need to visit Australia! It warmed our hearts to hear that they help animals from all around the world. Some of our favourites are playful meerkats, as well as a splendid red panda. Later we had trouble solving this challenge and started feeling like we were failing as a team. School exams suffocated us, but we eventually managed to find time to solve it with our joined forces. It might sound ridiculous that such a cinch would give us a hard time, but we felt stronger and more united than ever when we received a positive response to the challenge.

Just when we thought that Australia could not be more perfect, we were introduced with the generosity and cordiality of its residents. It was the first time we heard about the tragic story of the shipwreck Stefano and the Aborigines who helped the Croatian crew. Although Aborigines may not be completely accepted amongst Australian people, their worth is as great, especially considering their harsh history and perseverance on the island. We were also fascinated by great Australian minds who had invented many important inventions. We certainly couldn’t imagine living without a Wi-Fi network, films, or a refrigerator. We were truly surprised by the number of terribly essential items we probably wouldn’t have without the people of this fascinating country.

We learned more and more with each challenge, and Australia truly bewitched us. This competition managed to distract us, at least for a moment, from worrying about the end of term exams at school and the current coronavirus pandemic affecting the whole world. Regardless of the results, this experience will forever be remembered as a cause of enthusiasm and excitement in difficult times. Now that we are so close to the prize, we feel more connected and motivated than ever. But whatever happens, we will be grateful to have gained this experience and learned so many new and interesting things. So thank you for making it possible for us and giving us the opportunity to learn so much about the beautiful country that Australia is.

Lilly pillies

Dina Zelanto, Brigita Džaja, Magdalena Zrnić, Tea Hruškar, Nika Gudelj