

Baylor Choir sings in Australia

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The
Baylor
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By Julie Carlson

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The Baylor Religious Hour Choir recently spent nine days in Australia, performing and providing service throughout the Sydney area.

"We worked with a local church and some of its sister churches," said Maxey Parrish, faculty sponsor for the choir. "It was a small, suburban church that has been in existence a couple of years, but is starting to grow and trying to expand its outreach."

The students sang in churches and also worked in a coffee shop the host church operates as an outreach ministry. They performed public concerts, often several in one day.



Allison Deily of Houston gets acquainted with a koala during a Baylor Religious Hour Choir trip to Sydney, Australia.

"An interesting thing is that the public schools allow for an hour of religious education per week," Parrish said. "This is unusual by U.S. standards, and the religious education can be any religion. So, we were allowed to perform in the schools.

"And the school kids really looked at us like a novelty, because while the Australians aren't hostile to religion like you would encounter in Western Europe, the Christian church is not a dominant force in their lives. But they were very warm and receptive. We were treated very well."

Recent Baylor graduate Allison Deily of Houston had been a member of the choir since her freshman year and had taken two previous mission trips—one to Alberta, Canada, and one to New York City.

"I have traveled extensively in Europe, but I found Sydney to be a unique cross between British and Asian cultures. It was really interesting," she

said.

Deily found working with the Australian churches a particularly rewarding experience.

"The pastors were so encouraged by our presence there," she said. "Most churches in Sydney have congregations of about 30 to 100 people, so our choir was as big as the church we were helping."

The Baylor Religious Hour Choir has been a university organization since 1948 and serves primarily as a ministry to Baylor's campus and churches in Texas. The choir also travels nationally and internationally for annual mission trips. Previous years' mission trips have included destinations such as Taiwan, Mexico and France.

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