

## **My First Winter in Wollongong**

**By Rachel Loveday**

It's that time of year again. Autumn session has officially finished, everyone is celebrating the end of session and exams and are preparing to go home for the winter break.

Everyone except me of course.

Well that assumption is slightly arrogant and narcissistic, some of my fellow students would not be going home for the break and it is highly likely that they would have better reasons for that than I do, such as their status as an international student, for example. What's my reason for not going home? Avoiding the extremely cold and unfriendly weather of my home town of Wagga Wagga.

You might think that I am being a wimp for making the decision to not go home purely because it's cold (hello it's winter time! You might say) but let me explain. Wagga Wagga's winter starts around early May not early June, the temperature is usually below ten degrees, sometimes five at nights and can be at zero in the early mornings and there is always fog, frost and/or ice. This results in having to get a bucket of water to throw over the car more than once so driving isn't more hazardous. Even my family's trusty ducted air conditioner and heater isn't immune to winter, if too much ice gets on the box (yes it's a technical term, or at least my own technical term for it) on the outside of the house, it can stop working altogether. If that doesn't sound horrible to you, then maybe you should make the five hour trip to Wagga Wagga to find out for yourself, which is also another reason why I decided not to go home—I don't own a car and it makes life easier for my parents as they don't have to drive up to get me and then drive another five hours back.

So this is my first winter in Wollongong and how have I found it so far?

To my happiness there is no fog, frost and/or ice to battle every morning and it is rarely below ten degrees. I put my heater on at night for white noise and not as a necessity to survive the cold nights and most days I can get away with not having to wear a jumper over my long sleeved tops.

The downsides? The only one I can think of are the high levels of rain that border on flash flooding. I've written this article on the second day of torrential rain that has caused a severe weather warning to be issued. Although I do have an umbrella in my closet, I don't bother using it as the wind is that strong that I know it will break—five past umbrellas have taught me that. I have since invested in gumboots which are both comfortable and necessary (and if you get a black pair of knee-highs, can be quite fashionable, or at least in my mind they are), I've also invested in a raincoat.

I've survived one month of the coastal winter without a scratch on me, I've got two months to go and after that it won't be long until we're back to my favourite kind of weather—hot and sunny but with Wollongong it'll be more like humid and overcast.