



Scholarships for Australian German Student Exchange WA Inc.

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GASS Report

On the student side of things, GASS has been quite succesful in the past year. We have held several GASS events: a brunch to welcome back the returning GASSies, and during the hosting period we organised Rottnest and Pinnacles day trips. The first year GASSies also ran a meetup event and I'm delighted that they have been willing to remain involved with and take on more responsibilities within GASS. It is probably also the first year in a while in which the number of active GASSies has grown.

I attended Wintercamp in Victoria this year and I saw strong GASSie retention and involvement, even several years after they've returned from their exchanges and I've had many discussions and have spent a lot of time thinking about how this could be done in WA. I think that it's important to provide value to GASSies to continue to be involved past their exchange, such as through fostering friendships with a tight-knit GASS community or providing opportunities to develop and display leadership and organisational skills, as well as encouraging them to give back to an exchange that is a chance for GASSies to experience a new way of life, develop and mature in a foreign country.

Part of the reason why I've been particularly concerned about developing GASS culture and GASSie retention in WA is because I have found it more difficult to be as present as in previous years, having graduated from university last year and now having other commitments, particularly professional.

I've felt the pressure from the lack of senior GASSies this year and a lot of the work falling on Steph and I to organise and facilitate GASS activities. This isn't the fault of anyone in particular - the reality is that the GASSies who are currently involved have been so since before the pause in operations due to Covid, so for 4+ years - long enough to graduate school, finish a degree, and start full-time work.

Now that we're in the third year since the resumption of the exchange, I hope that there are younger GASSies who would be willing to step up and usher in a new generation of SAGSE and GASS involvement.