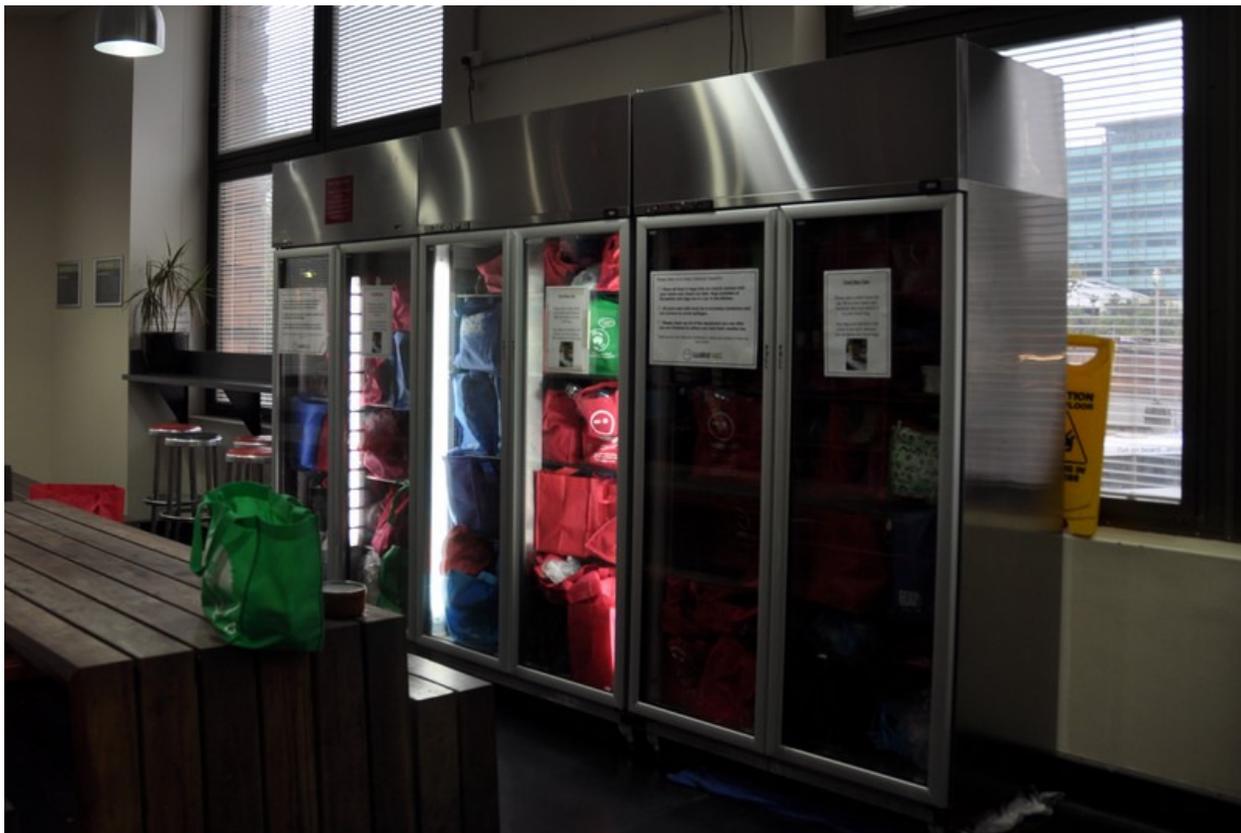


Day 24 – Sydney and travel to Kuala Lumpur [Monday 14-Feb-2011]

We got up early to start getting prepared for our trip to Malaysia. We have to be out of our room by 10AM and there is a ton of things to pack. Talked with Erik and he is doing well in class.



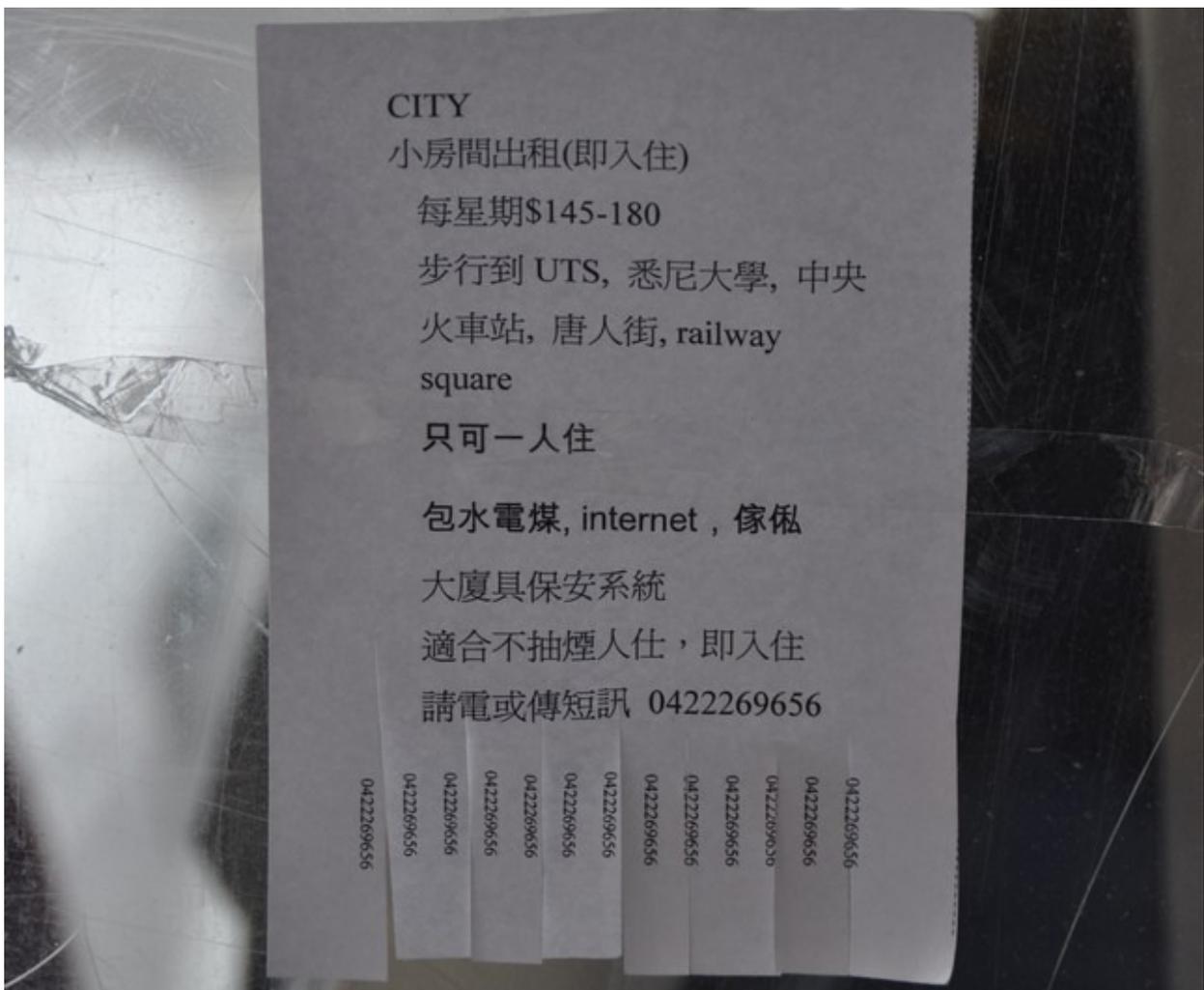
Food cubbies in the kitchen for people staying at the Wake Up! Sydney hostel



Communal refrigerators at Wake Up! Sydney



Australia's Holden Motors (GM) keeps a V8 powered El Camino concept alive.



I felt very intrigued by this since I like “internet”. I almost pulled a tab.

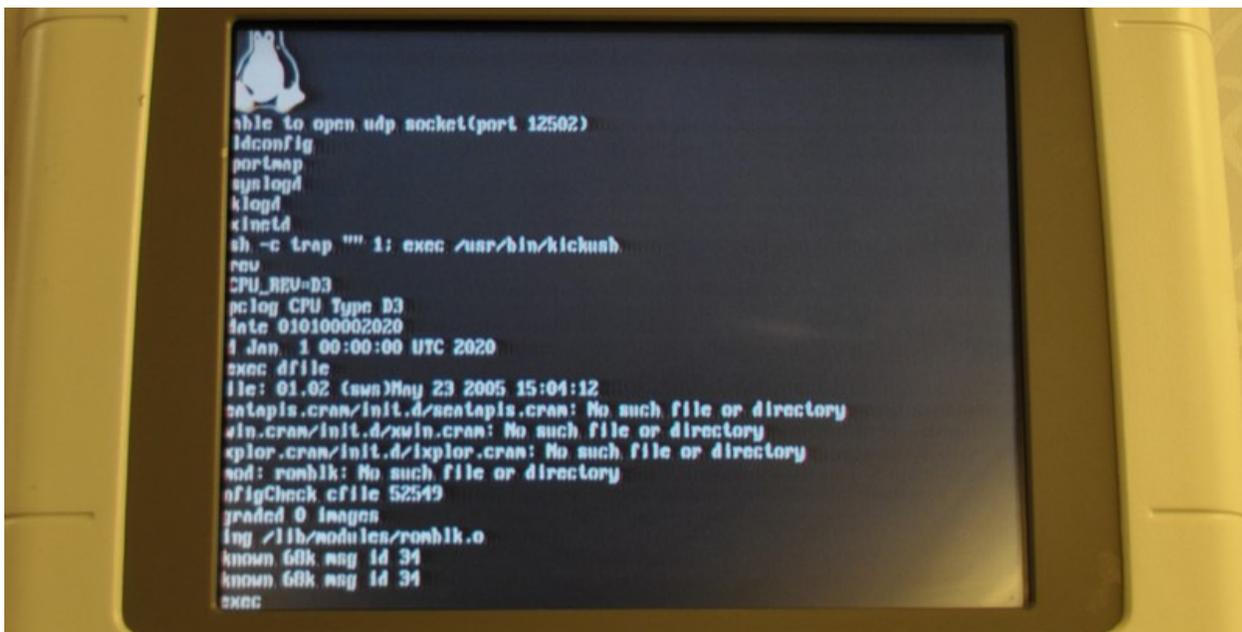
We were able to leave our room by 8AM. Unfortunately, we were not able to have them store our bags. Instead we had to use their for-pay storage lockers. We could not fit our mound of bags in a single locker so we had to rent two. Still a good deal, though.

We decided to take the free 555 bus and head down into town. We stopped by a major book store in town to look for travel books. I was totally dismayed to find that Lonely Planet Books (headquartered in Australia) are twice as expensive in AUS as in the USA. That is upside-down in the true sense.

We went by China Town to eat an early lunch. We went back into a Chinese mall that we visited yesterday, where they have an Asian food court. We both ate variants of Chinese noodles. It tasted really great. We went back to the hostel and decided to check out a bit earlier than planned and caught a bus ½ hour earlier than we had planned. We arrived at the airport with more than 2 hours to spare.

We were really confident as we approached the counters. **But we were in for a real shock.** They enforced the 20Kg limit per person, vigorously. And it turns out we were 10Kg over, together. I asked if we could pay extra. The fee was \$53 per Kg! You have got to be kidding me! **They wanted \$530 for our rather small excess weight.** We pulled out of the line and started to go through our bags. We had to throw away lots of things. I mean, who'd want to pay \$53/Kg for soap and hair shampoo, etc? After a lengthy and painful hour, we finally brought it down enough that they let us pass. I was also worried that we would have to pay \$150 for the 3 Kg luggage cart we paid \$37 for.

We got on to the plane with some time to spare. The 8hr+ flight was without any real events, except that the plane's entertainment system crapped out during the flight. At first everything went black. Then we could see the system coming up. I was sure it was some Windows crap. But, alas, it was Linux.



Nerdy: in flight entertainment system died and when it tried to come up I saw a penguin!

We studied the Lonely Planet book for Kuala Lumpur before we arrived. I spotted the booth selling pre-paid taxi tickets right away. But I had to get some cash first. And that was a challenge. At first, the machines said they could only give out up to 30 notes. I finally game up and asked for 300 MYR (about \$100 USD). And it all came out in 10 MYR bills (about \$3.3 ea).

It was a bit of a pain to get a taxi to accept the bags we had even though we had paid for them. But after a cute looking girl from the taxi desk (dressed in Muslim scarf and all) intervened and helped us out. It cost us about 73.50 MYR (\$23) to get in. That was a deal, since the last Km of finding our Hostel, in the middle of the night, was a really challenge even for the drivers. Yes, there were two of them: a trainee and a polite trainer.

We hung around for a while at the hostel, close to midnight, and had a beer. It was very refreshing to have access to decent internet that was free at the same time. We went to bed at 1AM.