



### **Australian Outback Adventure, South East Queensland, September 2015**

The first meeting of our group was at the South Brisbane railway station where we departed on the train to Surfers Paradise to be welcomed by the Gold Coast 5W group. Our first taste of the Gold Coast was a boat trip along the canals with lunch provided and a specially prepared BBQ dinner in the evening on the pool deck of our hotel. Unfortunately, despite all their preparations for a remarkable visit, the weather was not kind to us and it rained the next day when we headed out for a bus tour to Mt Tamborine. This didn't prevent us from enjoying our lunch at Hinze Dam or the Devonshire teas at the Dancing Café.

The next day we departed on the 'Lady Brisbane' for a pleasant boat trip up the coast sans luggage which was kindly ferried by car to our Brisbane accommodation by local members. A big thank you ladies. On Sunday we were 'welcomed to Country' by a troupe of Aboriginal dancers and a didgeridoo player, tour of the Botanical Gardens and buildings with the



'Brisbane Greeters' and we enjoyed the kaleidoscope of colour provided by the gardens of Toowoomba. Of particular beauty were the gardens at Spring Bluff railway station, Queens Park and the Toowoomba Japanese Garden Ju Raku En.

The Sunshine Coast ladies organised a bus trip north to Eumundi Markets and the beautiful beaches of Noosa and Mooloolaba where afternoon tea was provided above the 'Loo with a View' - on the deck over the beach toilets. As this also happened to be my birthday, I was very pleasantly surprised when the ladies appeared with a birthday cake and then sang Happy Birthday to me.

Our next big outing was to the Lone Pine koala sanctuary where we had our photos taken with a koala and met other native inhabitants such as snakes, wombats, kangaroos, emus and dingos. That evening we were bused back to the Gold Coast to watch the Australian Outback Spectacular. Donned with a western style hat, we were fed and watered while being entertained with activities such as bareback riding, cattle catching, and hearing stories of brumbies, our famous Red Dog, snowy river legends and ghosts, all to a large movie backdrop and songs by Christine Anu.

Another highlight was Riverfire, a spectacular fireworks display on the Brisbane River. However, this was not an ordinary fireworks display as we were ushered onto a paddle steamer and taken to a vantage point on the river where we had a fantastic view of passovers by fighter jets and helicopters, while indulging in a seemingly never ending stream of food and drink.



Our final day saw the coming together of gatherers and local members when over 70 people attended a luncheon at the Women's Club at the University of Queensland. Here we made our farewells and wished those members who were continuing on to the post tour to Cairns a very safe and enjoyable trip.

As well as the gathering organisers, I would like to thank the local members who hosted us before and after the gathering. We are very grateful for the way you welcomed us into your homes and ferried us to and from the train stations and airport. A big thank you also to the drivers who picked up our luggage from the Gold Coast and dropped it at our hotel in Brisbane while we enjoyed the boat trip along the Queensland coast.

**Jenny, Western Australia**