

## Gone Walkabout

### Day 1 Brisbane, Queensland

Welcome to Brisbane, Australia's third largest city. Straddling the Brisbane River, the city quietly executes its evolution in true, casual Queensland style. It feels no need to advertise its virtues &ndash; locals know how good they've got it. After transferring to the hotel, located at the area known as South Banks, take a walk along Sandy Beach and picnic at one of the fabulous grassy public areas. Maps will be provided in your welcome packet. Dinner tonight will be on your own. To avoid jet lag, drink lots of water and get to bed at a reasonable hour.

### Day 2 Archerfield, Brisbane

Transfer for the day to Archerfield to meet your plane and our crew. A CFI will be on hand to perform the check rides, sign off for your Australian licensing, and conduct the tour briefing. Afterward, enjoy a tour around the region and a &ldquo;welcome&rdquo; dinner with your travel companions.

### Day 3 Brisbane to Armidale

Located in the New England district of New South Wales, Armidale at 980 m (3,215 feet) above sea level, has the distinction of having the highest airport in Australia. It is also one of the few cities in Australia to have 4 distinct seasons. An attractive and graceful city with tree lined streets, Armidale shows where new cosmopolitan ideals and old pastoral traditions can live in harmony. Take a guided riding tour today through the forests to Wollomombi Falls, one of the highest waterfalls in Australia. On the way back into town, we stop to tour Australia's largest hydroponic berry farm and sample some of the fresh picked berries.

### Day 4 Armidale to Orange

Orange calls itself, &ldquo;Australia's colour city&rdquo; after all the goldfields in the area. You will be able to take a tour of the Ophir Reserve as well as try to make your fortune in the fossicking area. People have been known to find rather large nuggets just by digging around in the leftover pile.

### Day 5 Orange to Mildura

The streets of Mildura provide a clue as to the economic basis of the area, having names like Orange, Lemon, Lime, Valencia, Avocado, Cherry, Muscat, Vineyard, Olive and Walnut. The district supplies 80% of Australia's dried fruit, 15% of its citrus fruit, 85% of New South Wales's winemaking grapes and it possesses the second and third largest packing companies in the world. Mildura is also a riverside resort, drawing hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. It is, literally, an oasis in the desert. Its paddle steamers, lush golf courses and other attractions are a welcome site after many kilometers of consistently dry, brown terrain and wheat fields. Our tour today is of the citrus groves and the largest packing facility in Australia. Free samples, anyone?

### Day 6 Mildura to Broken Hill

Broken Hill is often called &ldquo;The Silver City&rdquo; as it holds the largest known silver, lead and zinc lodes in the world. Life in this outback town depends so heavily on the mines that many streets are named after metals, minerals and compounds: Bromide St., Oxide St., and Crystal St., for example. Other than the remarkable aridity of the region, the most striking aspects of the town are the number of pubs and that it is the home of the largest company in Australia, Broken Hill Proprietary Company, aka BHP, &ldquo;The Big Australian&rdquo;. Fly through the centre of the 16 million hectare (39,536,861 acre) West Darling pastoral industry and its 1.75 million wool producing merino sheep. All of which are protected by a 600k (373 miles) dog proof fence that has come to be called &ldquo;The Dingo Fence.&rdquo; Tour an underground silver mine, and yes, you get to wear the hat with a light on it.

### Day 7 Broken Hill to Louth

Louth is a tiny hamlet located on the Darling River southwest of Bourke. This afternoon, we experience life on a 130,000 acre working cattle and sheep station. For those of you who prefer to sit and read a book, pick a spot beside the river and enjoy the sounds of the birds while nestled in amongst the ancient gum trees. A 4WD tour of the station, fishing, canoeing, and yabbie catching is available. Don't worry, your hosts don't expect you to join in on the everyday chores, but some of them sure can be fun!

### Day 8 Louth to Charleville

Charleville is the Southern Queensland base for the Royal Flying Doctor Service as well as the School of Distance Education, (formerly called the School of the Air). At most Royal Flying Doctor offices, visitors are greeted with a prerecorded video about the services provided by the Royal Flying Doctors. However, in Charleville, visitors are taken through the operation and shown first hand the coordination process required to keep the doctors working. At the School for Distance Education, you are allowed to view classes being held. Careful! They love picking American's to teach the pupils something about the USA. On the outskirts of town, is a 12 foot tall gun known as the Steiger Gun. In 1902, a meteorologist, in an attempt to break a 6 year drought, convinced the city to have built 10 guns which would be placed in intervals around the city. These guns were then filled with gunpowder and fired simultaneously. The theory was that the noise would shake the rain loose from the clouds. He left town the next day. Tonight, be prepared to see the night sky as never before. Today is a relaxing day. Our excitement begins tonight at the Cosmos Centre. It's powerful Meade telescopes, and lack of city light pollution, allows the opportunity to see the depth of the universe in a

beautifully unique fashion. Watch for passing satellites.

#### Day 9 Charleville to Longreach

Arrive in Longreach just after lunch and transfer to the Jumbuck Motel, which boasts a Qantas history room as well as barramundi, kangaroo and emu on the restaurant menu. Enjoy a tour of the Stockman's Hall of Fame and see how the Australian Jackaroos and Jillaroos tamed the Australian outback. A sunset campfire dinner cruise caps off the evening.

#### Day 10 Longreach to Charters Towers

Charters Towers is sighted as being the most beautiful inland city in Queensland. The grand palatial mansions act as a not so subtle reminder of the wealth hauled out of the gold mines in the late 1800's. The Gold Battery itself is acknowledged as one of Australia's most important historical-industrial sites. It was one of the first permanent batteries on the Charters Towers goldfields, being established in 1872. It is the largest surviving battery relic in Australia and the oldest surviving battery in Queensland. Although it has not been operational since 1973, guided daily tours provide a rare insight into the scale of activity on the goldfields in the early days. Towers Hill Lookout provides a peaceful walk, complete with native wildlife, and view of the city. At night a film is screened in the amphitheatre depicting the "ghosts" of goldmines past.

#### Days 11 and 12 Charters Towers to Yeppoon

Land at nearby Rockhampton, also known as the beef capital of Australia, and take a 45 minute ride to the gorgeous little seaside town of Yeppoon. Be sure to watch out for kangaroos being chased off the golf courses! The day is yours...do you want to hang out on the beach, go scuba diving, fishing, skydiving, golfing, or explore the surroundings? There is a small crocodile farm at neighboring Emu Park and let's not forget the Singing Ship memorial to Captain Cook that provides an enchanting view of the bay. Decide what you want to do and we will arrange it for you. The price is included in your trip.

#### Day 13 Yeppoon to Caloundra

Southern humpback whales return to Caloundra every year on their migration route back to Antarctica. Keep an eye out for them as we pass over the beach. Today we visit world famous Australia Zoo, home of Steve Irwin, the Crocodile Hunter. Australia Zoo has more to offer than just crocodiles. There is a bird aviary, snake exhibit, (don't worry they are all behind glass), tigers, Asian elephants, and wombats as well as kangaroos that you can cuddle. The park closes at 5pm so there is plenty of time for evening activities back in the city. After dinner, go for a walk along one of Caloundra's beautiful beaches, or try your luck at the racetrack nearby.

#### Day 14 Caloundra to Coolangatta

Upon landing in Coolangatta, the tour is officially over, but return transportation to the hotel will be provided. A farewell feast is planned for tonight. Enjoy the day shopping, resting or both.