



MY TRIP TO AUSTRALIA

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When I first saw the motion picture "Crocodile Dundee" many years ago, right then and there in the theatre, before the movie had ever ended, I decided that someday I was going to visit Australia. It became a dream of mine.

Even though we started to plan full family trips to Australia while I was married my wife (at the time), deep down inside, really did not want to go. She always found last minute excuses to back out of each planned trip. So... when I got divorced guess where I headed.

I flew to Australia... and landed in Melbourne (Melbourne was chosen as the city I first landed in by being the target hit by the dart I threw, with my eyes closed, at an Australian map on my wall at home... sounds scientific, right?). When I first arrived in Australia, I had no idea how long I would be staying or where I would be going. I had no specific timetable, agenda, route or itinerary... not even a vague clue. I did not know if I was going to stay for a week, a month, or longer.

What I did immediately after I arrived in Melbourne was to check into a major 5 star hotel in the heart of the city. I spent about an hour, or so, settling into my room then I went out and bought a large scale, very detailed, road map of the entire country... I then went to an electronics store and purchased an electrical plug adapter so that I could plug my laptop computers American electrical cord into the very differently configured Australian electrical outlets. Then I went to a large nearby travel agency, which had an entire wall full of display racks filled with about 100 different brochures informing about all the many available escorted tours of Australia. Each brochure was about one specific scheduled tour and showed the very detailed daily itinerary of that specific tour.... tours that ranged from only three days up to a full month long tour.

I carefully spread my newly purchased map out on the bed in my hotel room... and started very carefully reading, one by one, each of the fifty, or more, escorted tour itinerary brochures that I had obtained from the local travel agency. Each brochure would inform where the tour went on

day 1, 2, 3, 10, 30 etc. (along with photos of each area or attraction) and they fully explained why the tour had chosen to include that on the tours itinerary, and what there was to see and do there. If I liked the sound of the place that the tour had planned to visit that day... I found the location on my map of the entire country and drew a circle around it. After continuing doing that for most of the night, circle by circle... by the next morning I had well over a hundred circles then drawn on my very big Australian road map. My drawn circles appeared, spread out, in almost every part of the country. I then simply "connected the dots" by drawing a line along a road that went from one circle to the next circle, etc. That way I then had my entire route planned out on the map... and where and why I should stop at each circle on my map along the way. My travel timetable would not be the same as on the tours that I had studied to plan the trip. It would be "however the wind blew me". Meaning... after arriving at each "circle" on my big map... I might explore the area and simply leave the next day... or if I really enjoyed it, I stayed for several days, or weeks, and in a few cases... I even stayed a few months in a few places ... before moving on to the next "circle" on the map.

First thing next morning after arriving, it was time to send out some emails to my family and friends back home... Filling them in on my safe arrival and telling them of my proposed travel route and how I had derived at it.

As I then happily plugged my laptop computer into the electrical socket in the hotel room, I had my first, and probably my most embarrassing, Australian adventure.

Before plugging it in, I had first changed the adjustable electrical input setting switch on my laptop computer changing its power input setting from Americas 110 volts to now work with Australia's much more powerful 230 volts... then I pushed the two flat wide metal prongs of my American ended power cord into my newly purchased power plug adapter so that the cord would then fit into the "strange" Australian electrical outlet in my hotel room.

I was so proud of my "technical self"... and already mentally congratulating myself for switching it all over to Australian electrical current so easily... BUT as I plugged the new end of the computer power cord into the, extremely high 230 voltage, standard Australian electrical outlet... the instantly resulting cascade of sparks, flames and "explosion" from the electrical outlet and resulting fire quickly pointed out that I had obviously forgotten something... Oops!

The hotel room instantly totally filled with "tons" of very thick acrid, gagging, black smoke caused by the burning plastic electrical outlet housing on the wall. And some plastic computer parts had instantly melted, pulverized, vaporized... and now fully and rather evenly covered most of my right hand (that I had been using to push in the electrical plug into the outlet when it went "boom") with a burning hot, melted, full black plastic "layer" that was now covering and stuck to the skin of my entire right hand and fingers, and painfully burning it,

I quickly realized that, in spite of the way it felt, it was probably minor and I would obviously survive it... but (like the person who wades into the swamp to drain it and suddenly finds himself surrounded by alligators) that was no longer my biggest problem. My physical pain, coupled with my deep emotional sadness for the loss for my laptop computer, was very quickly and totally pushed right out of my mind... as my emotions instantly changed to total panic and brick red embarrassment. You see... all this thick black smoke in my room had set off this major 5 star, high rise, hotels entire fire alarm system. Fire alarms rang from the lobby all the way up to the penthouse floor. All this in a foreign country that I had only been in for a total of less than one very short, not yet even full, day... oh dear.

My Adrenaline then really kicked in and now I was working on this new problem at 100 miles an hour... I sadly discovered that the windows in my upper floor hotel room were not built to be able to be opened..... so I then opened my rooms door to the interior hall corridor to try to dilute the thickness of the smoke in the room in the hope that it would then shut off the hotel wide fire alarm... the only result from that action was that now the entire floors hallway was now also filled with thick, acrid smelling, black smoke... the alarm was still ringing away... and guests were running through the smoke filled hallway, on their frantic panicked way to evacuate the burning hotel before they burnt to death.

In a few minutes the hotels entire front desk staff, its manager, and many hotel security officers appeared on my floor... all scurrying in different directions, trying to locate the fire amid the thick black smoke. I "herded" them into my room and quickly explained the situation to them... "all is cool"... no real fire... no problem... just thick smoke from my "minor" electrical blunder... "PLEASE QUICKLY SHUT OFF THE HOTEL FIRE ALARM".

Then they broke the sad news to me. In Melbourne the law is that any fire alarm from a high rise hotel is not allowed to be shut off (in fact, they told me that they actually had no way to do that even if they were allowed to) the fire department must respond to that alarm once it goes off. As I watched out of my upper floor window... the streets surrounding the hotel were soon totally filled by an unbelievably massive fleet of all types of very large fire trucks that would typically be required to fight a serious high rise hotel fire... and MANY firemen were quickly racing up the high rises stairs.

"Stupid American"... was the look they all showed on their faces as I embarrassingly explained the circumstances to the Fire Captain and crowd of official onlookers. For some unknown reason I had kept my black plastic surfaced burnt hand hidden in my pocket throughout it all. I had felt that if they knew that it had resulted in an injury it might make it all seem that much more serious to them. They checked over, and photographed, my computer and its cords, the hotels power outlet... even recorded the computers model and serial number... about two hours after it all had started everyone finally left. I was so embarrassed.

Oh if the earth had only opened up during the process, and allowed me to simply fall into it... so that I could have escaped from all that embarrassment.

That night... to "soothe my nerves" (great excuse, huh?)... I went to the one major, Vegas style, gambling casino in Melbourne. It was just about the same as a major Vegas casino. However, I discovered some interesting Australian differences. I enjoy playing the game of blackjack. I sat down at a standard blackjack table and put my bet into the familiar box outlined on the cloth surface in front of me. In a little while, I found myself pleasantly into a rather lengthy, wonderfully profitable "hot streak". Onlookers started to notice my hot streak... and all of a sudden, someone came up behind me and placed a stack of chips on the table right behind my betting stack of chips in the betting box on the table. Then another person put a third stack of chips directly behind the stack that was now behind mine. At times up to 10 people (that were not playing the game) standing behind the players at the table had placed their bets, lined up in a straight row, right behind mine. They call this "back betting". This custom is encouraged in Australia. People who don't actually want to play the game themselves... wander around the casino... find someone who is playing, seems to really know what they are doing, and appears to be good at the game... or who is having a real hot streak at the moment... and they place their bets behind that players hand. These "back bets" are then paid exactly the same as if the bettor had been in the seat playing the hand themselves. Usually no conversation takes place between the "player" and the "back bettor". As soon as the player's hot streak ends these "back bettors" disappear and find someone else, who is on a lucky hot streak to "back bet". These "back bets" seem to be a major betting source. Many times, all seven seats at the table were totally occupied by players. In America that would have obviously limited it to only seven bets placed on the table... but in Australia sometimes many times more "back bets" are on the table than the "normal" bets themselves... hence so much more "betting action" for the casino. Lady Luck seems to run in streaks and it is a great idea to always be "betting on" a player that is "red hot" at the moment.

During my tour around Australia I stopped, and played, at every one of, the perhaps ten or so, very spread out casinos located in the country. I even found a "Harrah's casino in Darwin, which is just about in the outback itself.

I bought a new car and started touring the entire country. Even though I was only going to stay for a relatively short period of time, I did not want to buy, what obviously would be a more sensible, and considerably cheaper used car for my stay... because I did not want to take the chance of any of its possible unknown problems (the reason the previous owner had sold the used car in the first place) popping up and it possibly then breaking down, and stranding me, in some desolate, dangerous, isolated outback region. I eventually wound up staying in Australia for a little over a year. I drove over 25,000 miles in Australia and explored every city and every inch of that

extraordinary country very thoroughly and methodically. I did most of my touring by driving around the only continuous road that actually circles the entire country along the coastline. (an entire modern country that has only one road to get from major city to major city) I made many side trips off that road but always returned to that road and continued my circular trip around the entire coastline of the country. That way I was able to visit every large city in the country and 95% of the population.

That one road is the only way to drive the country. When it goes through the major cities, most of the time, it becomes the major 8 lane divided super highway that we Americans are used to. But as soon as it leaves each major city and reaches the outskirts it typically quickly turns into a slow two lane road. In some very small, one to twenty mile, segments of the most northern rural outback areas it is still not even paved yet. That is the Australian national highway system.

As I arrived in each city or major area, I checked into a local hotel. The first thing that I did after checking into each hotel was to go to the hotels tour desk or, if the hotel was too small to have a tour desk, I went to the display rack holding the brochures advertising all of the local escorted sightseeing tours that were available in that area. I then signed up for many sightseeing tours in each city. I always took the general narrated sightseeing tour of the city itself, to quickly get a guided total overview of the city (which also let me decide which areas I found interesting and wanted to return to later in the week and explore more fully by myself), plus I also took many of the other interesting tours to specific local places, points of interest, attractions and areas. This way I let someone else, who knew the area perfectly, do the driving and take me directly to all the places that were always the most interesting and to fully explain everything about them to me. In most cities I spent my first several days taking a wide variety of many available local escorted tours... thus having a well-informed local guide show me all of the interesting places in each area.

My poor car, I really beat the hell out of it all along my trip. I took it into places where it was not even safe to walk over... and also over many hundreds of miles of unpaved dirt outback roads. Then there were the sheet metal nicks, scratches, dents and paint abuse that it took while I was trying to get accustomed to driving on the left side of the road, while simultaneously trying to get accustomed to the even more difficult task of judging my clearance distances on the left side of the car while sitting at the steering wheel that was now located on the right side of the car, but that experience could fill an entire book all by itself and have you laughing for hours. It was the trip of a lifetime. I have such wonderful memories.

Australia is the land of extremes. It has been called "the land beyond time".

I have two contradictory descriptions of Australia for you. It seems funny to put them together but each is totally true.

Australia is just like America.
Australia is nothing like America.

"two nations divided by a common language"

Lets look at some of the language differences... just to do with the automobile as an example:

In the USA it is called the hood..... In Australia it is called the bonnet
The trunk..... the boot
The windshield.....the windscreen
The fender.....the panel
Auto body shop.....panel beater shop
Gasoline.....petrol
Tire.....spelled tyre but pronounced the same.
Steering wheel on the left.....on the right side of the car
Drive on the right.....drive on the left side of the road
Miles.....kilometers.

Australia has many differences like those. Yet, because it is basically so similar you feel right at home there.

Australians are very friendly people. Most Americans will feel right at home with Australians. The country has so much more of a British influence than an American influence, but they sure do totally love Americans. People have actually said to me "please just talk about anything so I can listen to that cute accent that you Americans have". The minute that you open your mouth and say just one word they instantly know that you are an American.

The custom in Australia is that there is no tipping at all in any place for anything... and no one expects to be tipped. No tipping the waitress in restaurants, in taxicabs, hotels, valets, for deliveries, etc. or for any services. It seems like a simple concept but is really hard (but very refreshing) for an American to get used to. You keep wanting to automatically reach into your pocket and tip. You kind of feel guilty like you are cheating them. After I had tipped someone, a new Australian friend that was with me at the time, asked me not to do it again... she said that we tourists were then making it tough for the Australians.

Most Americans don't realize it... but Australia is a huge land mass (of just under 3 million square miles). It is just about the same size and shape land mass as the USA however it is the only large country in the world that is actually its own continent. Which means that the entire country, even as big as it is, is actually an island totally surrounded by water. Basically, it is a large island the size of the United States. Everything within the country is such a long way away from each other.

Australia is thinly populated... it only has about 10% of the total U.S. Population... and 90% of its inhabitants live right along the coast or within 5 miles of the ocean... and most of those live along the southeast and east coast (Melbourne, Sydney, Queensland). Consequently, the majority of the landmass, which is the entire center of the country, is almost totally empty. There are places there where you can easily go 1,000 miles and never see a house, a paved road or any kind of town. It takes nearly as long to fly from Sydney on Australia's east coast to Perth on its west coast — 2,037 miles — as it does to fly from New York to Los Angeles.

An Australian airplane pilot explained the differences to me. In America if you fly from New York to Los Angeles at night you constantly see the lights of other cities below you all along the way. However, in Australia, if you fly the same distance... Say from Sydney to Perth... You see nothing below at all along the way until you finally get to Perth 2,037 miles away.

All the big cities are right along the coast and are pretty much exactly like U.S. Cities..... Except for Sydney, which is so unbelievably magnificent.

Sydney is a cosmopolitan city of a few million people. Sydney Harbor is one of the world's largest natural harbors. The waters of Sydney harbor touch very deep into Sydney itself and all of the downtown city areas and even into most of the distant suburbs. If you enter Sydney's sheltered harbor, by boat, from the ocean through a very small passageway, it expands into an unbelievably mammoth harbor. The harbor is so large that the shoreline surrounding the interior of the harbor is over 150 miles in length, and is lined with steep mountains on several sides that come right down to the harbor waters edge. Every inch of the sides of the mountains surrounding Sydney harbor are absolutely covered, from top to bottom, with houses that are built to take advantage of the beautiful view of the harbor. The houses are crammed together so tight that I don't think that you could squeeze another house onto those mountain sides. Those house covered steep mountains then become part of the amazing total sight. The Sydney opera house in the harbor is a world icon, and rightly so, and a clue to the type of city that Sydney is. I went to a wonderful play being put on at the opera house one night. And several other entertainment functions were also being put on simultaneously in other different "forums" inside the multi function opera house. Sydney is so picturesque and so unique that it is like living in a museum. Even though most of Australia is practically deserted, land in Sydney itself is very expensive, probably on a par with land in some of the more expensive Californian cities.

I have visited the world famous Sydney beaches of Bondi, Manley, Coogee, and others. All with their surfers and famous ritualistic volunteer lifesaving clubs.

You can drive anywhere in Sydney by car, by bus, or you can take a water ferry boat to almost any point in Sydney or almost any of its suburbs. Lots of people do much of their commuting to &

from work, entertainment or shopping, by modern multi hundred passenger, very fast, ferryboats. The cities very large fleet of ferryboats do not just go from destination point to destination point, as some ferries in America do, but the Sydney ferries stop every few blocks, at a ferry dock, to take on & let off passengers much like busses do in most other large cities. The ferries have different routes and hubs, as transfer points between routes, just like busses in American cities. The major ferry hub (and starting point) is right in the heart of downtown Sydney. The ferries even stop along their routes at specific highly trafficked buildings... such as the convention center and the Sydney casino.

For a few months I rented and lived in the multi million dollar penthouse of a direct oceanfront condo with entire room width, floor to ceiling, see through glass walls in every room. Every one of the full glass walls overlooking the ocean right on Manley beach (a northern Sydney oceanfront suburb). Manley is a topless (and occasionally also bottomless) beach... it was a "really tough job" but, but after all, being the nice guy that I am, someone had to protect those delightfully clad women. The ocean was literally at my front terrace and the protected waters of the Sydney harbor were just about at my back door. I could choose to drive, or take a bus, to downtown Sydney. Reaching it in about 45 minutes... or I could simply walk one block just behind my condo to the Manley ferry dock, catch the ferry, and be in the heart of downtown Sydney in about 15 minutes after a totally enjoyable boat ride through Sydney harbor, right past the famous bridge and opera house.

A couple of hundred yards off shore along the entire length of Sydney's ocean swimming beaches, and running parallel with the shore, is a continuous line of miles and miles of shark nets to keep the sharks away from the beaches and protect the swimmers. Australia has more shark attacks than any other spot on earth. Protective shark nets are also placed around swimming spots and beaches inside the harbor itself.

The streets of the cities in Australia are not crawling with kangaroos, koalas, dingoes, ostriches, emu, wallabies, wombats, crocodiles, or snakes as I had always been led to picture. Come to think of it I, never saw any of these in any city. I had to go out into the country side (or "bush" as they call it) or, more typically, a zoo, to see any. Australia has the world's greatest number of critters that can poison or kill you. There are also lots of little critters that are highly toxic. Of the ten most poisonous snakes in the world all ten are found in Australia and most of them are found exclusively in Australia and nowhere else on earth. The areas sea snakes are even ten times more poisonous then their land based brethren. In some northern areas swimming is impossible because one sting from the tentacles of the areas tiny fingernail size "box jellyfish" (which is more poisonous than a cobra snake) while swimming and you could be dead within 3 minutes.

The interior of Australia and its "outback" are nothing like the USA. It is very harsh living, hostile environment, very primitive and dangerous. It is mostly blistering hot desert in the center, rain forests in the northern mountains right along the coast and all almost totally deserted. Australia is actually the driest continent on earth.

There is so little grass or vegetation for cattle to graze on that cattle ranches in the outback limit the cattle grazing to one cow per acre. In many parts of the outback you drive through some massive cattle ranches (called "ranges") some ranches are actually as big as some of our entire smaller states in America. Public roads pass right through these private cattle ranges. You enter the range through a gate or wide open grating in the ground that stretches across the entire road, and keeps the cattle from leaving. You drive all day and finally exit the range through another gate or grating crossing the road. Australia does not have much industry of its own and cattle are a major export of Australia. Much of the cattle are exported alive aboard boats to the countries whose religions or cultures require ritualistic and/or supervised killing of the cattle. Japan is also a large purchaser of live cattle from Australia.

Water is in extremely short supply in the majority of Australia and is a major problem everywhere in the country except in the few major cities themselves. Once you are out of the big cities all of the rural houses have special rain gutter systems on their roof that captures all the rain water that falls on the roof and carries it into very large water storage tanks on that persons property to supply the household with water between the sparse rainfalls. In most areas, this rain capture system is the only source of water at all. If it does not rain enough and the families' water storage

tanks go dry a big tanker truck must be brought in at great expense from another distant area to fill up the families' water supply tank. A sheep farmer once explained the severity of the water shortage problem to me... "if I run out of feed for my sheep I just have to go to the market and buy some more... but each time I run out of water... I must sell all my sheep and go out of business or the sheep will die".

Just about the only place in the remote outback which resembles any form of civilization and a place to stop and fuel up the car, sleep, eat and buy from a very limited selection of groceries are the very few unique very isolated "roadhouses".

You have no choice of where to sleep or eat in the outback (your choices are... sleep in your car, outside on the ground or at a roadhouse). Every "roadhouse" is literally a 100 year old "dumpy", falling apart, wooden building, which is a combination flophouse motel with only a couple of rooms (I always half slept with one eye always looking around the room for poisonous spiders, snakes and other critters), plus a really bad, two or three, table restaurant, a one pump gas station and local bar combined, (I am sure that the whiskey kills the germs on the seemingly always dirty glasses), the roadhouses also have a very limited "7-11 style" area with a limited selection of packaged convenience store style grocery items to buy and take with you plus they also have questionable hot eat in food for consumption at the two or three dirty rickety old restaurant tables

The few roadhouses in the outback are spread out several hundred miles apart from each other. For the sake of travelers' safety, and survival, their locations are always very clearly marked on every road map. The outback combination roadhouse and gas stations are subsidized by the government... Because if they make a profit or not... they absolutely have to be there. If they were not there travel into the outback by normal people via automobile would be virtually impossible.

If you miss stopping at one roadhouse, along your route, while driving in the outback or don't totally fill up with gas or if you get lost or stuck, the environment is so hostile, you could so easily die. There are many roads in the outback but only one outback road is paved (simply blacktop), every other road is dirt. If you leave the one paved road, a 4 wheel drive vehicle is a necessity (and the vehicle of choice for the area).

On one particular two week trip into the outback I took some newly made Australian friends with me. Through their knowledge and experience, they absolutely insisted that we carry extra filled spare gas cans (as an emergency safety reserve) in the cars trunk (or "boot" as they call it) with us into the outback or they would not go along.

Most of the vehicles in the outback have very heavy "crash bars" (that the natives call "bull bars") welded a few inches in front of their front grills and bumpers. Night time collisions with wild animals that are dashing out of the bush in total darkness across a road are very common and a real problem in the outback. In my combined Australian travels I have literally seen hundreds upon hundreds of large kangaroos, as well as some cows and even wild horses, littering the roadsides that were killed by collisions with vehicles the night before. A collision with an animal of that size at 60 to 90 miles per hour would totally destroy the entire front end of the car... leaving the occupants in extreme danger stranded all alone in the outback.

You could write many books just about the local resident outback "characters" that you meet as they congregate at the small bar in these sparse and dirty outback roadhouses. Some of these "outback people" are beyond description. If they ever walked into a crowded American restaurant the place would instantly become so silent that you could hear a pin drop and everyone would be staring at them with their mouths hanging wide open

During my time in Australia I varied from long periods of living in ultra modern million dollar beachfront condos or 5 star hotels in the big modern cities (a far cry from my stays in the "roadhouse" dumps in the outback) ... to shorter periods of living in the outback sometimes right along with the Australian natives (the aborigines) who spent their days hunting and fishing... cooking and eating by campfire. The world's oldest continuously maintained human culture, the Aborigines, believed to have arrived in Australia from Indonesia as long as 60,000 years ago. I

have slept in the absolute squalor of aboriginal villages. And I “slept” with one eye open. After all...the aborigines did start out centuries ago as cannibals.... And it is rumored that sometimes “their old habits die hard”.

In today's world most aborigines still live on their reservations but have traded in their horses for pickup trucks and their spears for shotguns but other than that “equipment modernization” they still basically live the same life of old on the reservations. Still hunting, gathering food, living off the land, in the outback and behaving almost the way they did hundreds of years ago. They look totally different from our native American Indians. Aborigines have more of a deep black African native look but with much wider and very “puffy” faces. When I saw my first Aborigines I could not stop staring at them. Learning about their very ancient culture... and listening to the many ancient childlike stories of the Aboriginal storytellers... and “reading” the same type of stories on the thousands of years old paintings on local cave walls... the cultures stories, such as, how lightning and thunder was first born in ancient times... or of how man evolved from snakes... of how animals like wolves and fish are actually our brothers.... or they were transformed into that animal from their human form as punishment for something or other... is totally fascinating.

Australia is just about exactly half way around the world from America. It's about as far from the U.S. Mainland as you can get and still be on this planet. How far is far? From New York to Sydney is nearly 10,000 miles. If you leave the USA towards Australia and keep traveling in the same direction as soon as you pass through Australia you are actually then half way around the world and as you continue on you are actually heading back home again, getting closer to America from the opposite direction then you first left from. The saying is that as you travel the world Australia is as far as you can go away from America before you are simply heading right back home again.

Many things in Australia are exactly opposite the way they are in the USA...

When it is 12 noon in Australia it is 12 midnight in the USA.

When it is winter in America... it is summer in Australia ... etc.

In America the further south you travel the hotter the climate gets. However in Australia, it is reverse, the further south you travel the colder the climate gets

In America the further north you travel the colder the climate gets. However in Australia the further north you travel the hotter the climate gets. The northern “top end” (as it is called) of Australia is the hot, muggy and the tropical part of the country. The northern part of Australia is very much deeper into the tropics zone (and thus much hotter and wetter) than any part of the U.S.

The southern end of Australia (Melbourne, Adelaide & Perth) has just about the same multi season climate as perhaps from Maryland to Georgia in the USA, although it only snows up in the areas mountains. Perth is the most remote large major city in the world. It is over 2,700km from the next major city (Adelaide).

While in the south western coastal region of Australia traveling between Perth and Adelaide I thoroughly explored the beautiful Margaret River region.

There are three major things to do when in this region.

1 –“the cultural winery connoisseur thing”.

There are about two million wineries around the area. Ok, so my count is slightly off. I probably counted one or two of them two or three times each, hic.

2 – “the earthy back to nature thing”.

I went to the Cape Leeuwin lighthouse. This is the tourists favorite location to best observe where the Indian Ocean and the Southern Ocean meet, and merge. You stand on the beach at the lighthouse. When you look to your right you see the Indian Ocean. When you look to your left you see the Southern Ocean.

This is the spot where I made possibly my greatest earth-shattering discovery ever. I did something that I am sure that none of the millions of tourists standing on that same spot before me did. (drum roll - brace yourself now) I also looked straight ahead.... And made an amazing discovery. The two oceans are really just one massive continuous body of water. It all looks exactly the same. Not even a double solid white line painted on the top of the water at the spot they "join" to keep them separated as two oceans. I am sure that there is a lot of exchanging of molecules of water between the two oceans. I am also sure that most of those water droplets spend part of their lives traveling around the Indian Ocean as part of that ocean, and the other part of their life traveling around the Southern Ocean as part of that ocean. They might even take a few side trips through other oceans of the world. This is probably just the stop where they change "trains" (so to say) to continue along with their lifelong trip.

I explored the mouth of the breathtaking Margaret River as it flows into the ocean.

3 – The adventurous "surfer dude" thing.

Lots of surfing going on around this area. The waves are amazingly high. I am not sure if they exaggerate on officially issued printed wave height tables for the surfers, but the official printed list showing the typical wave heights for each of the about 15 individual surfing beaches in the area shows different typical wave heights for each of the specific beaches ranging from 7 to 25 feet high, phew. They wouldn't exaggerate the typical height of the waves, would they?

I flew round trip in a small plane, just off the mainland, to Kangaroo Island for a full day escorted sightseeing tour of the island. Kangaroo Island is an island about 20km off the coast of Adelaide. There are many wonderful things to see on the island. However, the one place that wins a spot in my very selective permanent memory bank of wonderful places that I visited is Seal Bay.

Seal Bay is truly extraordinary, it is like watching a Jacques Cousteau sea animal documentary on television, except that this time you are right in the middle of the documentary. Seal Beach is a lovely flat wide white sandy beach about three city blocks long. The beach has always been protected from the human killing of seals because the beach is shielded by a massive sand bar in front of the beach that goes many miles out into the ocean that did not allow any of the seal killing ships to come close enough to be able to land their people on the shore.

The beach is home to a colony of about 600 sea lions (seals), most of them as big as I am, and their newly born "pups." Because of their centuries of isolation and therefore protection from human killing and stupidity, these seals are not at all afraid of humans. You can actually walk on the beach right in the middle of the seal colony. As long as you do not act threatening towards them, make any sudden fast moves or loud noises, the seals allow you to walk amongst them and they totally ignore you, except for the ever-curious "pups" that want to thoroughly examine every inch of you. As in all other major tourist animal and human interrelation areas in Australia there are well-informed park rangers ever present to protect the seals and make sure that you don't act threatening towards them, and to explain everything about the seals to you.

Only about half of the seal colony is on the beach at any one time. The seals have a sleep-awake cycle that is very different from ours. They leave their pups on the beach in the general care of the colony and they are out to sea hunting for three days and three nights at a time without sleeping. They then return to the beach and sleep for three full days and three full nights before embarking on another sleepless three full days and nights of hunting. This three days and nights of non sleep hunting and then three days and nights of sleeping is repeated over and over constantly, just as we do with our continuous 24 hour cycles of awake and then sleeping.

I also visited the argyle diamond mine. This is the largest diamond mine and largest producer of diamonds, in the world. That one mine alone produces one third of the world's diamonds annually.

For security reasons even though the mine is more than a full days drive from any civilization you are not allowed to drive to the mine. The only way you are allowed to go there is to fly into the mines small private airstrip by prior authorized small private plane. I flew in with an approved pilot/guide and had lunch in the 600 mineworker's cafeteria and shopped in the mineworkers

stores. I then spent about 3 hours touring the entire mine and its operation. What an impressive and massive operation. The scale of operations is totally mind-boggling. They are moving entire mountains. Security is very tight. Before they would let me into the area I had to sign a paper at the mine airport giving them permission to search me anytime they wanted while I was there, but they never did. I am sorry to inform you that no diamonds "fell" into my pocket during the entire tour so you are totally out of luck for any "souvenirs" of that mine.

How can diamonds be so expensive, they are so plentiful? At this mine they find about 20 diamonds per minute (that's an average of one diamond every three seconds) from the finely crushed ore passing on the fast moving conveyor belt. That works out to finding 1,200 diamonds per hour, 28,800 diamonds each 24-hour workday for an awesome total of 201,600 diamonds each 7-day workweek (yep the operation continues 24/7) or about a million diamonds each month. Yet, that's not even the final number actually produced because most of those diamonds then get split into many smaller diamonds in the cutting process after they leave the mine. It is an entirely computer controlled and totally automated mining operation. Not a human decision, or intervention, is made in the entire process. Once a diamond bearing crushed rock particle is identified by a computer that is reading signals from an overhead ultraviolet scanning unit scanning the crushed rock on the conveyor belt moving below it that individual diamond bearing rock particle is automatically "sucked up" from the below conveyor belt by an automated very high power, fast moving, pivoting vacuum arm device. That stone alone is then automatically carried by attached pneumatic tubes and dropped into a very potent hydrochloric acid bath (the only chemical used in this entire mining process). The acid melts away all the attached rock, leaving only the pure diamond. The entire process is so simple to understand and yet so massive to watch. Some of the individual buildings that are part of this continuous automated conveyor belt assembly line mining process are equivalent to an entire city block in length.

I also took some very interesting tours of some of the very large west coast pearl farms. I really learned a lot about the cultured pearl industry. I am also very sorry to inform you that no pearls "fell" into my pocket during any of my pearl farm tours so you are also totally out of luck for any "souvenirs" of the pearl farms.

One evening, I took a side tour that enthusiastically drove me across a bridge a few miles outside of Melbourne... leading to a very large island only about a block offshore... the tour was to witness the nightly "ritual of the Penguins". Each evening at dusk, crowds of hundreds of humans gather along a specific two block long area of the islands coastline beach to watch this amazing "clockwork predictable" nightly ritual. The ever present Australian park rangers have roped off special areas (they have even constructed massive concrete elevated bleachers for people to sit on inside those areas... the raised bleachers allow the people to be able to view the entire ritual area... and installed floodlights aimed at the shoreline and entire beach so that people can clearly see the entire amazing event) that the people must be in while watching this ritual. The rangers are there to protect the penguins and to be educational and informative to the humans. If a human steps out of the special roped off area provided for them... a park ranger instantly banishes that person from the beach. At an exactly predicted time...in the almost total darkness that had just arrived minutes before, just as the absolute last rays of daylight are rapidly totally disappearing... one singular miniature Penguin (this 12 inch high Penguin species are called miniature or, "Fairy Penguins") emerges out of the surf (looking just like it is wearing a tuxedo) and slowly, and very cautiously waddles onto the beach. He seems to be taking his time and carefully looking 360 degrees all around. As soon as he feels that the beach and surrounding area is safe he then goes back into the surf. Then, all of a sudden!, within about a minute, as if by a signal, hundreds of these 12 inch high miniature penguins then appear simultaneously out of the surf and rush towards the beach. They speedily "waddle", across the beach towards the land behind it. They then scamper up the very steep, vegetation covered, hills that begin just behind the beach and continue traveling for several blocks. As the Penguins move they call loudly to their mates, and brood, that are waiting in distant nests that are totally unseen, and safely hidden, in the vast hilly area that starts behind the beach. This continual loud vocal signaling (or calling) back and forth between the new arrivals looking for their nests, and their mates that are waiting in the nests and vocally guiding their specific newly arriving mates towards the one specific hidden nest out of the thousands in the area, produces a tremendously loud ongoing "chatter" in the area. Wave upon Wave consisting of hundreds of penguins each wave... continue to arrive and appear out of the surf, this arrival process continues, spread out, over the next hour or so. The

total number of arriving Penguins eventually reaches into the thousands (happening, all totally visible from the bleachers, within a one or two block beach area)... each Penguin following exactly the same procedure as the Penguins before them. Then as every Penguin has eventually found, and entered, their specific hidden nest, throughout the vast hilly area, and has totally disappeared... The area is completely quiet once again, looking absolutely deserted, with not one single penguin visible in the area. Everything then looks, and sounds, just as it did before the Penguins had arrived. Not a single Penguin, nor a trace of a Penguin is visible. The entire area is totally still and soundless again. The "show" now being over... the humans leave too. The next morning precisely at dawn this procedure reverses itself with waves of thousands of penguins simultaneously heading out to sea to fish and gather food. They stay out at sea all day until that evenings massive sunset rush back to their beach nests all over again.

One part of the trip that I could have done without was the two day drive from Perth to Adelaide. It is a single straight road across the vast empty desert that goes on for about 900 miles between the two cities. It is called the longest straight road in the world. It is exactly as advertised. 900 miles of never turning the steering wheel even the slightest. It sounds somewhat interesting... but it will actually drive you nuts. Every few hours I found myself purposely weaving wildly side to side in my single lane. I did that just so I was able to turn the steering wheel even the slightest bit.

On the east coast, the north/south midpoint of Australia (Brisbane, surfer's paradise & the gold coast) has about the same hot semi tropical climate as southern Florida. The gold coast itself is just about the same as living in Miami Beach. It even looks much the same with its crowded beaches, tightly packed together high-rise condominium buildings, beachfront hotels and large crowds of bathing suit clad tourists walking along the streets. The only thing that it has that Miami Beach does not is a very large modern, Vegas style, casino. Because of Australia's close proximity to Asia a very high percentage of the tourists are Asian.

But as you continue to travel north from the gold coast area towards Cairns & Darwin into the northern, and as the natives call it "the top end", of Australia you pass into the actual intensely hot... wet tropics. This area has so much more of an intensely torrid tropical climate than any part of the U.S. This wet tropics area has only two seasons, the "wet season" & the "dry season." During the wet season it rains heavily, all day, every day for several months and the monsoon floods cover much of the land and roads. You have to wait for the dry season, and the floods to recede, to travel in that area. Tourists have unknowingly arrived in the northern "top end" days before the monsoons began and then had to wait a month or more for the floods to recede enough to be able to drive out again.

The annual monsoon floods in the tropical "top end" get so high that most of the widely spread apart lakes, streams and rivers rise way over their banks, merge together and cover the land and roads in the many miles between them, sometimes covering the previously dry land with water an amazing 10 to 20 feet deep. It is spooky to drive through that area in the seemingly normal dry season and see the flood level watermark line on the trees 10, 20, or more, feet way above your head.

During the annual "wet season" floods, the crocodiles and snakes easily swim far out of their usual streams and home habitat. They then have the run of the entire land and sometimes wind up right in the middle of the northern "top end" towns. Even the houses in the towns of that area that are already built on high enough ground to avoid the annual massive floods are still also additionally raised up on stilts to keep the snakes out during the wet season. I learned that 90% of all poisonous snake species never climb higher than 18 inches above the ground. Therefore, if you build your house on 3 foot high stilts you should be safe from most of the poisonous snakes. I wonder if anyone has ever clearly explained that height climbing restriction to the poisonous snakes themselves.

In the extremely harsh climate northern town of Darwin (officially the intense storm and lightning capital of the world!), on the extreme tropic climate very northern tip of Australia, about 900 miles from the next nearest large town and surrounded by the harshest of the outback, the average age of the population is in their 30's. I have been told by the locals that life is so harsh there that an unusually high percentage of the population are alcoholics. I was also told, that local rumor has it

that if you move there and you are not an alcoholic when you first arrive... you probably soon will be.

That area has its own rather unusual way of life that takes a lot for a newcomer (especially a big city American) to get used to. The area seems to have one particular unusual custom called "Darwin Time". The natives pace is so slow and the people so laid back and notoriously undependable that almost nothing ever happens at the time it is supposed to, or scheduled for. As an example given to me... If, lets say, you make a very specific appointment for a local repair man to come and fix something on your property at 10 AM on Monday... he will probably eventually show up in, what they call, "Darwin Time". Meaning that he might possibly show up Monday afternoon for his Monday Morning 10 AM sharp appointment.... Or he might show up sometime on Tuesday... Or perhaps he will just show up sometime on Wednesday or even Thursday. Welcome to the newcomers frustrations of "Darwin Time".

I would not have been able to visit during the long rainy season so... I visited Darwin for three weeks in the swelteringly hot dry season (110 to 130 degrees Fahrenheit). I checked into Darwin's very modern Hilton hotel and used the Darwin Hilton as a base camp (I know how to rough it huh?) to explore all that the nearby tropical outback has to offer in that particular region of the country (I went to some of the very remote sites where the movie "Crocodile Dundee" was actually filmed). I visited the massive and impressive Kakadu national park (I slept one night in a large one story hotel, right in the middle of the jungle, where the entire building was built out of concrete to look exactly like a giant crocodile. The entrance way into the hotel was by walking through the "crocodiles" realistic "mouth"). I also took an awesome escorted adventure trip and spent a few days in the adjoining, aborigines most highly sacred, "Arnhem Lands" (a very rough two days trip to get across) where you first need advance permission from the aborigines to enter the vast remote, wild, menacing region and you must have an aboriginal guide with you at all times to protect their land, and its ancient artifacts, from thoughtless tourists. Some of the paintings on the walls of the caves there are tens of thousands of years old and tell entire stories of ancient aboriginal civilization. While in the "Arnhem Lands" I crossed, and boated along, some of the most highly concentrated crocodile infested waters in the world. Sometimes the crocodiles were packed so tightly together that I felt that I could easily cross the river by simply walking on the tops of the crocodiles backs all the way across the wide river. I left my car (with everything I owned for the entire Australian year long trip hidden in the trunk) safely parked in the Hilton hotel parking lot in Darwin and went with several experienced tour groups on different multi day adventures away from civilization way into the outback. I had a very interesting time. I could write a book just about my many outback adventures. The diversity of the country is amazing.

On one outback camping trip a fellow camper was badly bitten by a wild dingo that had been stalking the edges of our camp looking for food. He said the dingo looked so much like his sweet lovable pet dog at home that he tried to hand feed the dingo. All went rather well until the food being offered finally ran out and the dingo then became frustrated and attacked... literally biting the hand that fed it.

On another outback trip, one poor fellow tourist was unknowingly bitten on the leg by an extremely tiny poisonous spider. He had no idea that he had been bitten. His leg slowly started to swell up. And within a few days had ballooned to about 3 times its normal circumference, was totally discolored and excruciatingly painful. At that point they shipped him to a rather distant hospital... and only at the hospital did they discover the very tiny bite mark and realize that it had been a toxic spider bite. I kept in touch with him and over the next several months he had 6 operations on his leg... each having to remove areas of flesh on his leg that was continually progressively dying. When he was finally stable enough to be able to leave the country and go home he left the country in a wheel chair... with the problems in his leg still progressing very slowly and still not totally under control.

Because most of the country is so spread out and sparsely populated... receiving medical treatment is a real problem in many remote areas. To solve this the country has a national medical service network called "the flying doctor service". This consists of a large nation wide network of stationary complete medical facility bases and hospitals, each with its own small aircraft landing strip, in urban areas all over the country with a fleet of small size aircraft at each location and dedicated doctors. The doctors fly to each remote area of the country to provide

normal bi weekly medical clinic service for the residents. They also fly in instantly for life threatening emergencies and treat the sick or injured or fly them back to the resident medical facility that could be many hundreds (in some areas, thousands) of miles away. This flying doctor service actually services an area that is bigger than all of Western Europe... welcome to the vastness of Australia.

The flying doctor service leaves a standardized full hospital and pharmacies inventory supply and pharmaceutical locker full of every medication, anti snake venom and medical supply in each rural community and rural area (each container or bottle of medication in the fully stocked locker is numbered) ... and they instruct the sick or injured people, or their caregivers, by radio or telephone (if available) what to take or use (sometimes just using the container or bottle number) from the supply case for each situation until a doctor can get there or the person finally transported to the distant hospital.

Speaking about medical... I was taught the best way to treat snakebites... a very important issue in Australia. As a kid growing up in the American boy scouts I was always instructed to treat a snake bite by cutting an "x" with a knife over each individual fang mark and then proceed to suck out the venom from each wound. That is not the way they do it in Australia. They say that the way that I was trained by the American boy scouts is not at all effective and may actually cause more problems than it solves.

The whole idea here is to slow down the rate that the venom travels through your body. If you don't slow it down you could be dead within 3 hours (which in most parts of rural Australia is not nearly enough time to get help). If you do slow it down you might be able to extend that "window of life" period to 24 hours which might possibly be enough time to get help to you in a remote area and an injection of anti venom into you. It is advised that everyone who travels in the Australian bush country carry a rolled up elastic wrap (Ace bandage roll) with them. 90% of all snakebites are on the limbs. As soon as possible after the bite wrap the elastic ace bandage very tightly directly over the bite and then continue wrapping very tightly up the limb between the bite and the direction of the heart. Then find some sort of a splint, small tree branch, or piece of wood etc. And use it to immobilize the limb. Wrap another ace bandage around the limb and the "splint" to immobilize the limb as much as possible. Then lie down and don't move. Try to stay as calm and still as possible. Really concentrate on slowing down your breathing rate and heart rate. Don't panic or get hysterical... That causes your body to produce adrenaline which greatly increases your heart and body systems rate.

It is a fact that 99% of all people bitten by snakes in Australia were trying to catch or kill the snake at the time they were bitten... or, less often, they actually accidentally stepped on the snake while walking in the bush. The advice is when walking in the bush it to walk in a way to make very heavy footsteps so the snakes feel the vibrations in the ground as far in advance of your arrival as possible, know that you are coming, and can get out of your way, which most of them will do. If you do see a snake ignore it and move away from it. If you do get bitten don't then try to kill the snake so you can have medical authorities specifically identify what species bit you for which anti venom to use purposes. The experts say it is just not worth it. Trying to kill, or capture, the snake will probably just get you bitten a 2nd time. That additional 2nd dose of venom will then positively do you in. Several people also get bitten by picking up injured snakes, they find lying lifeless in the road that they think are totally dead... oops.

Speaking of snakes... on another of my adventures into the outback I went on a 4 day group outback tour with about 60 people on a large modern luxurious tour bus that originated from Darwin. It had become the custom on the tour at each point of interest along our way for the driver to stop, open the bus doors, and allow us 20 to 30 minutes or so outside the bus for taking pictures, stretching and exploring the area before reboarding the bus and moving on again. We eventually pulled into one spot, right in the middle of the jungle, which was a now deserted former pineapple plantation, complete with intact old water irrigation ditches, etc.. The tour guide proceeded to tell us the story that many years ago a major group of American investors led by the famous long time American entertainer Art Linkletter had invested many multi millions of dollars in a project here to try to grow pineapples in the Australian outback on a very large scale. They imported large quantities of healthy starter pineapple stock from Hawaii. The pineapples did not grow, the project failed, went bankrupt, the investors lost many millions of dollars, and the entire

irrigated plantation was simply left abandoned just as it was. By this time in the bus drivers slow narrative many of the tourists (cameras and unlit cigarettes ready in hand) had left their seats, were tightly packed uncomfortably into the aisle of the bus and impatiently shouting at the driver to open the doors of the bus so that they could get out. After waiting an appreciably long enough amount of time the driver finally said rather naively and so very painfully slowly "oh!!... You ... have noticed... that... I... have not... opened... the front or rear doors for you to get out here. Well...let me tell you why". "it is actually for your own safety. The exact spot that we are on right now just happens to have the highest concentration of poisonous cobra snakes per acre than any other spot on the face of the earth. However, since you people have been so vocal and obviously want out of the bus very badly I will now open the doors and let you all out for your photos and/or cigarettes, I hope that they are worth it to you. However, if you do have any problems outside the bus we have snakebite kits in our first aid supplies aboard. He then proceeded to open the bus doors and everyone instantly rushed back to their seats, away from the doors, pushing in total panic as if the snakes were going to crawl up the steps into the bus, in large mass, and attack. Not one person stepped off that bus... Go figure.

The 3 areas of Australia that I enjoyed the best were...

1- Sydney... and its suburban beach areas... to actually live in....

2 - The Cairns area of Northern Queensland with its mountainous lush tropical coastal rain forests and its gateway to the Great Barrier Reef... to vacation and "play" in.

Just up the road north from Cairns, high up in the most beautiful coastal rain forest is "Port Douglas" a top notch resort area and a community of mostly wealthy ex Americans where ex president Bill Clinton likes to visit. Last time he visited for his relaxation, the U.S. Government spent over 6 million U.S. Dollars just for his security while in the area. The Australian locals still cannot get over the U.S. Government's extravagance. The locals continuously wove that story into their conversations with me as soon as they found out that I was an American (which was every time that I opened my mouth).

I did my first scuba diving ever and it was on the Great Barrier Reef, which is the largest LIVING thing on earth, covering an area that is actually larger than the entire state of Kansas. (literally home to more marine species than any other spot on earth). That is something like a kid playing his first baseball ever... and it being in a major league stadium... in front of a World Series crowd. A professional video photographer went down on the reef with us, and I have an underwater video tape of my dive on the Great Barrier Reef. It shows me petting and playing with some rather tame fish that are practically as big as I am.

3 - On the much less populated Australian west coast my favorite place turned out to be Monkey Mia at Shark Bay (about a half days drive north from Perth). This is where you interact with the wild dolphins that continuously come to shore in groups from the ocean every few hours. I arrived at Monkey Mia with no prior arrangements and had planned to stay no longer than from a few hours, to at the most just overnight. Well, it was so amazingly awesome that I renewed my sleeping accommodations daily and eventually stayed for 3 full days. And... I only left then because the cabins had been booked solid way in advance and not available to me after my 3rd day and I would have had no place to sleep, or I might have stayed forever. It was actually that wonderful.

The place is absolutely amazing. When you see the groups (pods) of wild dolphins approaching shore from the ocean, you walk into the water up to your knees, stop and wait for the dolphins to approach you. The ever protective rangers on duty there won't let you go in any further than your knees while waiting for or interrelating with the dolphins. The friendly wild dolphins come in groups out of the ocean right up to the beach to interrelate with the waiting people and be fed by them. Nothing is keeping them there, they can swim right back out to sea anytime they want. Each group of dolphins stays for about a half hour playing with the people and then heads back out to sea again. Each group relates somewhat differently. A few are timid and maintain their distance until you offer a fish (supplied to you at no charge by the park rangers, who actually keep a very detailed tally of how much fish is given to each singular specific dolphin. They never allow any

dolphin to be fed by humans more than one third of their necessary total daily diet. This makes it necessary that the dolphin must still go out into the ocean to continue to hunt for food... and does not allow them to become dependent on humans) which the dolphins then eat right out of your hand. Others come right up to you, roll over, frolic, jump up & splash out of the water & play right next to you. One dolphin rolled over on its back, pressed its side up against me, and stayed there upside down for about 5 minutes allowing me to pet it all that time. The park rangers are always present to protect the dolphins. They only allow you to pet the dolphins on their sides, not on top or on their face or nose. The rangers make sure that people are not aggressive towards the dolphins, and do not hurt them. People are not allowed to reach out first to touch the dolphins. You are only allowed to touch or pet them if they come up to you first.

It is interesting to observe which people the dolphins are attracted to and whom they avoid. It appeared to me that many of the different dolphins coming in during the day are attracted to the same people as the dolphins before them and avoid the same people. Talk about people sending out vibes.

There is something very magnetic and deeply spiritual that I feel when I'm interrelating with the dolphins. I was totally infatuated and did not want to leave. I stayed in a rustic log cabin, complete with an outhouse that was two blocks distance away from the cabin. The log cabin itself was right on the sand of the beach just a very few feet from where the dolphins come to the shore to meet the people. The cabin had a front porch with rocking chairs from where you could relax, watch out over the ocean, and watch the next group of dolphins coming into shore so that you could then walk the few steps to the water and play with the dolphins. It is very relaxing at Monkey Mia. There is not much else to do there except to completely enjoy all of the beauty and tranquility of nature and to interrelate with the dolphins..... But then that's the whole idea, isn't it? Dolphins of Monkey Mia... I shall return.

G'day, mate, and heaps of other terms

In Australia, they speak English. Or so they'll tell you. But you can't always understand it because they have so much slang. A glossary of Aussie-isms:...

Bingle: Fender-bender

Cheesed off: Annoyed

Chook: Chicken

Cobber: Friend, mate

Crook: Sick

Dunny: Toilet (originally it referred to an outhouse)

Esky: A picnic cooler

Fag: A cigarette

Fair dinkum: Genuine or true. Often used as an interrogative as in "I caught a fish this big!" "Fair Dinkum?"

Fair go: A chance

Game as Ned Kelly: Brave (Ned Kelly was a famous 19th century Australian cowboy bandit)

Good-o: All right

Heaps: Lots or very. As in "miss you heaps" or "she was heaps nice"

Lollies: Candy

Macca's: McDonald's

Nick: To steal

To get nicked: To be caught

On yer bike! Get going

On ya! or good on ya! Good for you, or good job

A Tinnie: Can of beer

Wag: To play hooky

Whinge: To complain; most often heard in the term "whinging Pom"

Wowser: Teetotaler

Yobbo: An uncultivated, uncivilized character

"Y" the twist on endings?

Australians — Aussies, if you prefer — often add an "ie" or "y" to shorten familiar words. A few examples:

Chewy: Chewing gum

Chockie: Chocolate

Lippie: Lip balm, lipstick

Pressie (pronounced prezzie): Present, gift

Sunnies: Sunglasses

Footie: Football (Australian rules)

Plus hundreds upon hundreds more.

Locally available books that list the slang terms (a dictionary of Australian slang for foreigners) some are hundreds of pages thick.

Australians are kind of lazy with their speech. They shorten words every chance they get. They even just use initials for many things.

As an example .. "the Melbourne cricket grounds" as that major stadium was always called for many years...then started to be shortened in peoples speech and eventually simply called the much shorter initials... "the "MCG".

As the years went on and it always being called the "MCG" became the norm to the locals... well then they did the Australian thing and shortened it once again to simply calling it the "M"... "who is playing at the "M" on Sunday"?

I wonder what they will shorten it to after they get used to calling it the "M" for a few years.