

**Day 33 – Brisbane, Australia – Koalas - City Hall - 29 Oct. 09:** The day started partly cloudy but mostly bright sunshine with very comfortable temperature. As day broke we were entering the Brisbane River on the way to Brisbane, Australia. The city center of Brisbane is not located directly on the coast but about 10 miles inland on the Brisbane River. However, the river is deep enough to accommodate ships as large as the Amsterdam so that we were able to dock within 3 or 4 miles of the city center at the Portside Wharf Cruise Terminal. The map on the right shows that Brisbane is located about half way down the east coast of Australia



The Google Earth map below shows the location of Brisbane about 10 miles inland on the Brisbane River.



After entering the Brisbane River it took about 2 hours to reach the cruise terminal. On the way we passed the busy Brisbane Airport and some extensive port facilities consisting of cranes and cargo piers as shown below with the Brisbane skyline in the background.



Finally we came to the Portside Wharf Cruise Terminal as shown at the center of the picture on the right.

Soon the ship was tied up and we could check-out our surroundings. One thing that occurred to us through-out the day was how much some views of the city reminded us of San Diego. For example, the houses on the hill in the background of this view of the Portside Wharf on the right looked a lot like a



view of Mission Hills in San Diego as seen from San Diego Bay.

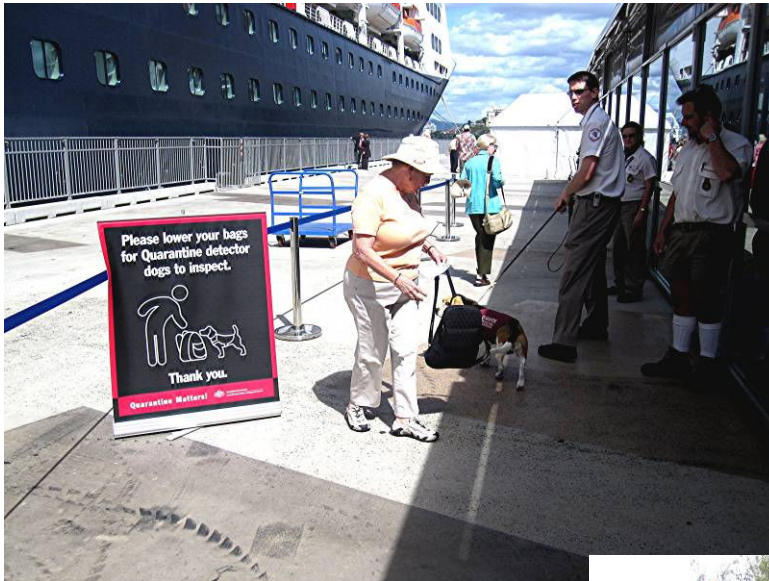
We couldn't help but notice that our verandah looked right into the bedrooms and living rooms of some apartments built on the dock, as shown on the left. It's hard to know if the possibility of tall cruise ships was anticipated when the building was constructed but with increasing cruise

ship traffic the occupants must feel like they are living in a fishbowl.

Our dinner table mate, Karen, had plans to meet with several ladies from the local Red Hat Society for a day of touring the Brisbane area. While waiting for the ship to be cleared by the local authorities, we noticed her Red Hat friends on the pier. We found Karen on the Lower Promenade Deck wearing a red sequined hat. We got this photo on the right showing Karen with four Red Hat friends waiting on the pier behind her.



We had signed up for a Holland American tour called Brisbane Sights and The Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary. At 9am we joined the other Amsterdam people on the tour and we filled up three large busses.



On the way out of the Amsterdam onto the pier we all had to pass by the inspection team that was enforcing the Australian plant and animal quarantine laws. Here we saw a working “Dog of Brisbane” doing his job, as shown on the left. Fortunately, Barbara had not tried to sneak any food off the ship and we got through this Beagle inspection okay.

We found our bus and driver Doug, shown on the right, and settled in for a 30 minute ride out to The Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary.



There are several zoos and reserves in the Brisbane area but The Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary claims to be the oldest Koala sanctuary, being started in 1927.

We headed immediately for the main attraction which, of course, was Koala Bears.



We found plenty of the little critters nestled in the eucalyptus tree limbs. As shown in these photos below.



They even had a retirement home for the elderly (>10 years) Koalas.



These retired Koalas appeared to be just as active as the younger set, as shown below. We wished the same could be said for us.



Their all-time longevity champion Koala lived to be 23 years old.

There was also a section set aside for the very young (1 to 2 years) Koalas. This area was called the Kindy (as in kindergarten) Koalas.



This youngster below was showing the same exuberance as his elders.



The Lone Pine Sanctuary people have latched on to a great idea for making money in addition to funds taken in from sale of admittance tickets. They have made a professional photographer available to take your picture while cuddling a Koala. The catch is that you must purchase one or more of the photos that are taken at prices from \$16 to \$50. The way they structure the deal it's pretty much a win-win situation because the money from sales goes to caring for the animals you love and if you buy one photo you can take as many photos as you want with your own camera. We bought into the deal and got the professional photo as well as this similar one with our camera as shown below.



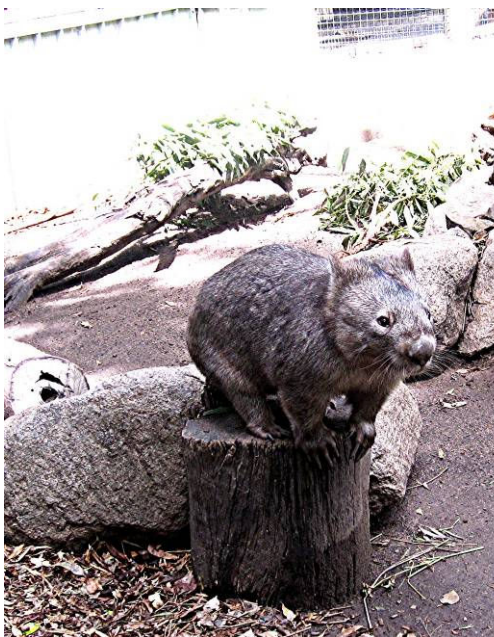
Barbara was thinking that cuddling a Koala is not as much fun as cuddling the grandkids but when you are 9000 miles away it is not a bad substitute.

After getting our Koala fix we headed out into the rest of the park. A sign was handy to guide our selection.

All of these animals, except for the birds are marsupials, carrying their young in a pouch on the mother's belly.



We checked out these Wombats, shown below, on our way to the kangaroos. Wombats may be increasing in popularity because we noticed that stuffed Wombats as well as Koalas are now available in the souvenir shops.





The Kangaroos had a large open grassy area set aside for them. When we first arrived a group of 25 or so was hopping across the area in front of us but we weren't fast enough with the camera to get a picture. However, they looked just like the movies we have seen of Australia and the kangaroos traveling the outback.

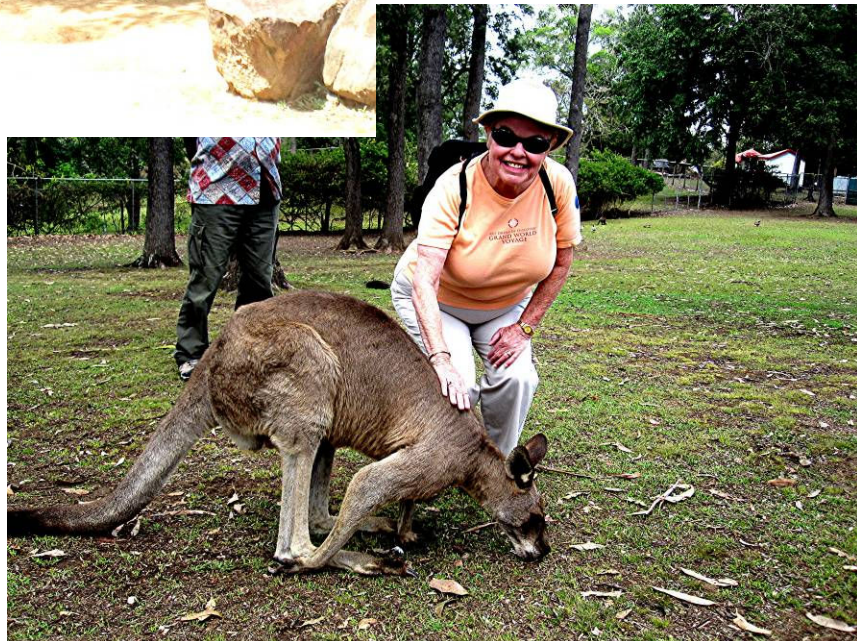
On previous trips to Australia we have seen the small kangaroos and wallabies but never seen the big Red Kangaroo. Today we saw the big Red Kangaroo. However, we couldn't get one to stand up straight to really check out the height which can reach 6 feet.

Here are some pictures we got of Red Kangaroos.



This one below may have been taller than Barbara if she could get him to stand on his toes.

By the way, they have a huge central toe nail on each hind leg that is an effective weapon when they fight another animal.



We moved on to a bunch of smaller Kangaroos that was resting up from their sprint across the field.



A smaller animal, closely related to a Kangaroo is the Wallaby. They have a smaller head and the ears are also smaller, proportionally, compared with a Kangaroo. We saw several Wallabies as shown in the picture on the left.

There were several Emus strutting around the grassy area. They would allow a person to approach but touching was not possible. Orlin (aka Great White Hunter) tried to coax this Emu to approach but this was as close as he got.

Our guide, Lyn, had told us these were Emus. She said that the Cassowary was too dangerous to mix with the tourists. However, in the original blog entry we called this bird a Cassowary. Lyn followed up with an email pointing out our error so in a 3 November entry we made a correction. Thanks Lyn!



While on the subject of birds we were very lucky in catching this flock of Rainbow Lorikeets at feeding time as shown on the left. A wild turkey was crashing the Lorikeet party.

Barbara has a fear of flapping feathers phobia so Orlin had to hold this Lorikeet feeder, while our guide, Lyn, looked on.



A Kookaburra bird came and sat on a fence just when we were looking so it was possible to get a picture. This bird was known to us only because of the Australian tune about the Kookaburra sitting in the old gum tree. Here is his picture on the right.



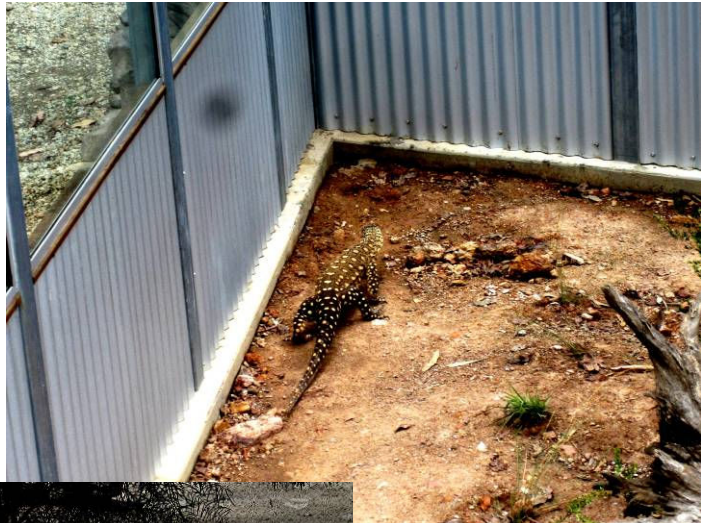
There were large lizards in the grass here and there that we could photograph, as shown below.



Then there were these two Lace Monitors that were fortunately kept in a cage, as shown below.



These lizards are not our favorite animals but there was one other that we photographed called a Perentie, as shown on the right.



Fresh water Crocodiles were on display also, as shown below.



At 11am there was a “Crocodile Holding Photo Opportunity” advertized in the Sanctuary brochure. Unlike the Koala photos which cost a few dollars, we tourists shared a bad joke about the Crocodile Holding Photo costing “an arm and a leg”. We never did find out how the session was orchestrated.

Finally, there was an exhibit near and dear to a dog lover's heart. Australian Shepherd dogs were put through their paces with a small herd of sheep. The sheep herder in charge said the Australian Shepherd dog instinctively knew how to do many of the tasks that were needed to herd the sheep and only a two percent of dogs he had trained could not master the needed skills.

The photos below show some of the scenes as the dogs were introduced to us and then moved the sheep around.



Sometimes it is necessary to pack the sheep in very tightly when they are put in trucks. The dogs demonstrated how they do the packing by “pushing” from behind and walking on the backs of the sheep.



We barely caught this dog demonstrating the back walking process in the photos below.

This finished the sheep dog demonstration.

We moved on the Dingo Wild Dog exhibit.



The Dingoes had a nice blond colored coat of fur that made them look quite attractive, as shown on the left. However, this is another case of the enclosure being a good idea.

Whether tame or wild the “**Dogs of Australia**” continue to look a lot more energetic than their kin folk we saw in the South Pacific.





After a two hour stay at the Lone Pine Koala Sanctuary we exited through the inevitable gift shop. We were looking for a small stuffed Wombat but had no success.

Our next stop of the tour of Brisbane was at the Mount Coot-tha Lookout where we could get an overview of Brisbane. There is a restaurant at the lookout but more importantly, a nice rock terrace where there is a good view of the city below. It was a little hazy but in this photo below the tall buildings of city center are clearly visible at top middle and part of the Brisbane River can be seen on the far right.



A map of the city showing the city center and the Brisbane River snaking through town is shown below. The Amsterdam was docked about 3 miles down the river to the right of the area shown on the map.



Our tour bus took us off of Mount Coot-tha and into the city of Brisbane. Along the way we took some pictures of typical houses that we saw. Some examples of modest homes we saw in Brisbane are shown below.



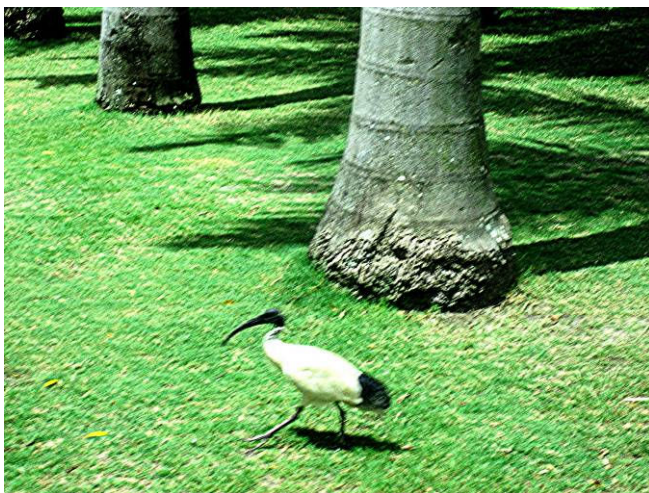
Our bus route took us along Grey Street and the South Bank Parklands on the southeast shore of the Brisbane River. There was a major exposition held in Brisbane in 1988 and after the exposition the citizens requested that the land occupied by the exposition be turned into a large public park. What we saw today was the result of that far sighted effort. There was a particularly pretty display of bougainvillea flowers near the Performing Arts Complex as shown in the photos below. The city center of Brisbane can be seen across the Brisbane River in the background.



There were also open areas with palm trees.



This Ibis bird suddenly showed up, much to our surprise. Apparently they are residents of Brisbane.



The bus then took us around the central part of the business-financial district of Brisbane and we ended up at the Hilton Hotel on Elizabeth Street. The bus tour was headed from the Hilton back to the Amsterdam but we elected to get off at this point and explore the downtown area a bit before going back to the ship. The Brisbane Port District had provided complimentary bus transportation from the Hilton back to the Amsterdam on a 30 minute schedule all day so we planned to catch one of those buses after looking around Brisbane.

We walked through the Hilton to the pedestrian mall on Queen Street. There were a lot of people walking and shopping along the pedestrian mall as shown in these pictures below.



We love pedestrian malls where you don't have to worry about traffic. That is particularly important in these countries with continual surprises provided by interaction with left hand traffic.

We shopped in a few stores for souvenirs but didn't find the small Wombat we were looking for.



Our walking eventually led us to King George Square and the City Hall between Adelaide and Ann Streets. On King George Square we found some fun statues to play around with. The photo on the right shows Barbara cavorting with some Kangaroos



Not to be outdone, Orlin found an attractive lady to hang around with.



The King George Square is dominated by the clock tower on City Hall that is shown in the picture on the right.

We had heard that the City Hall contained a museum and other displays that may be of interest so we sauntered over to the entrance. Near the entrance was the answer to our reoccurring challenge to find an appropriate spot to photograph Barbara's library card.

There was a sign that clearly announced that we had arrived at the Brisbane City Hall. We quickly took the required photo of the little yellow card with the evidence of travel.



We then went inside the City Hall where we found a cavernous foyer with a beautiful, early 1900s ceiling and wall decorations. There was an information desk so we asked the clerk if there was a tour of the City Hall. He said there were no tours but if we wanted to go up to the top of the clock tower that was possible. We thought that sounded like fun so we took the first elevator up to the third floor. At the third floor we transferred to an old elevator that took us all the way to the top of the tower.



There were 4 standard sized people waiting for the elevator which was posted with a limit of 8 people as shown on the right. The sign appeared to be neat and tidy and attached well to the wall. With that information we figured the elevator was probably in good mechanical condition and would be okay if we stayed with the posted limit.



Luckily, the next two people who showed up were a couple of Japanese tourists whose weight would not challenge the assumptions made by the engineer who arrived at the limit of 8 people.

The elevator had the classic look of the ones we remembered from our childhood trips to upscale department stores. Eventually the door shown on the right opened and 8 people who had toured the clock tower exited. We climbed aboard and the pleasant elevator operator took us up to the top and let us out in the columned open area just under the roof shown in the clock tower photo above.

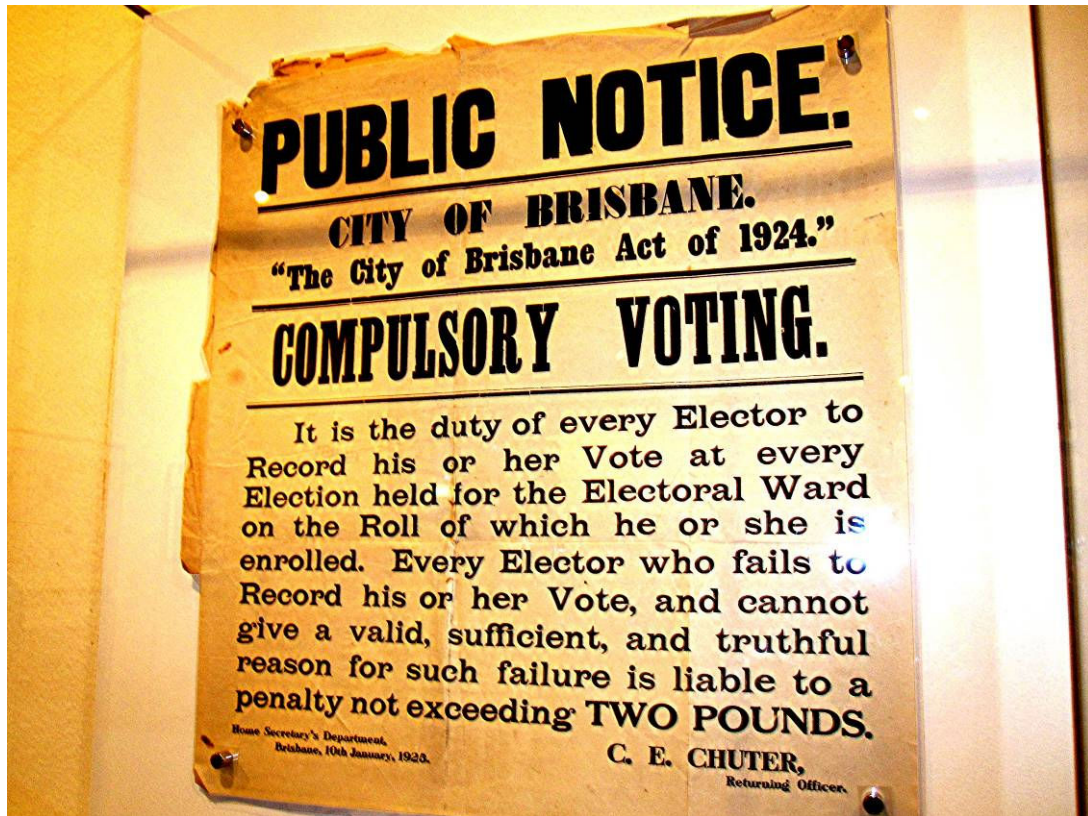


We started to walk around and view the city below us through the columns. The rose colored sandstone columns were beautiful as can be seen in this picture on the right. We were excited by the wonderful view of Brisbane we were getting. We could see the beautiful Uniting Church shown in the photo below. Set amongst the tall buildings of City Center it looked like a toy or model of a church. On 3 November our Brisbane tour guide, Lyn, gently pointed out by email that the Church name is **Uniting** and not **Unifying** as we originally reported. It formed from the uniting of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. If you need a guide in Brisbane we are definitely recommending Lyn.



Suddenly we were reminded that we were in a clock tower. We could hear the mechanism whirring as it prepared to hammer out the hour on a two ton bell that was located about 10 feet away from us. Our luck held as it was only 2 o'clock and then we only had to endure the booming sound for two strokes. After circling the place a couple times we were satisfied that we had seen enough of Brisbane and we took the elevator down to ground floor.

There was a museum in the City Hall that contained memorabilia from the early days of Brisbane. We took a quick tour of the museum and found one display that dealt with the Australian law we had heard about that requires their citizens to vote. The 1924 law for Brisbane was posted on the wall, as shown below.

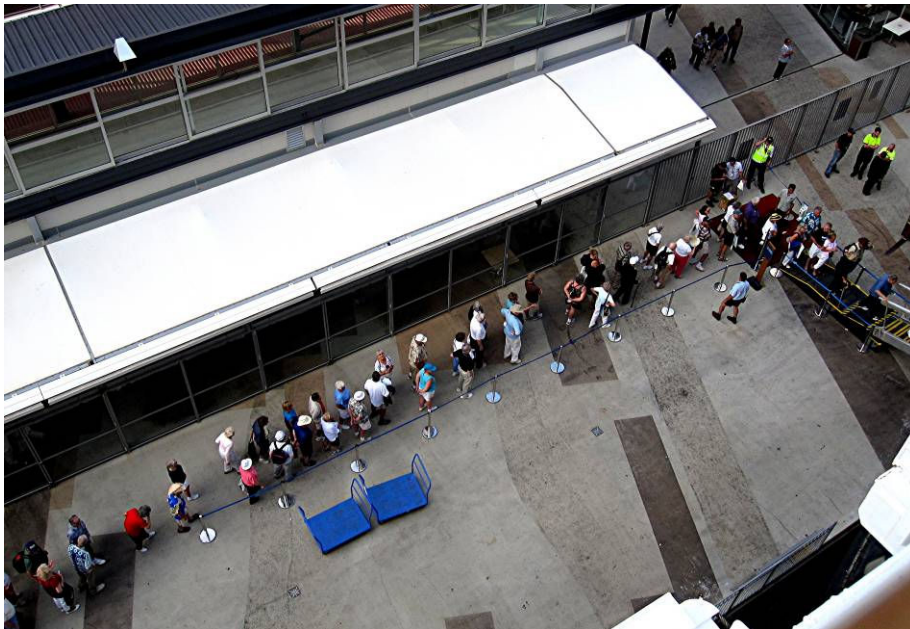


We assume that in those days they referred to a fine of two British Pounds. At today's conversion rate for British Pounds the fine would amount to \$3.38 USD. That was probably a couple days' work for the common man in those days and enough incentive to get the typical person out to vote.

This seemed like enough excitement for one day so we walked back to the Hilton Hotel and caught the shuttle bus back to the Amsterdam. On our way to the gangway of the Amsterdam we met Doug and Jean leaving the ship with their Australian friends who had visited them on the ship today. They were getting ready to say goodbye after their brief visit so we only held them up long enough to get this picture shown on the right. Left to right: Colleen, Ron, Jean, Doug, and Dyandra.



We got back on the Amsterdam and got ready to view the rush to the gangway as the 4:30 pm departure time got closer. We could see many fond embraces as friends and relatives parted on the dock. As the tour buses returned with their passengers the line up of Amsterdam passengers at the gangway grew for a short while. We took the picture on the left to show some of these folks making their way up to the security check.



About 5pm the Amsterdam pulled away from the dock. A group of Brisbane people gathered on the deck of the cruise terminal building and waved goodbye to us, as shown on the right.



After turning around in the river, the Amsterdam headed out to sea. About 2 hours later we were on the high seas again.

At 8pm we went to the see “The Unexpected Boys” singing group in the Queen’s Lounge. Their singing and stage patter was extremely well timed and presented. They had given a show several days ago and were scheduled in again because of popular demand. We enjoyed it immensely.

Tomorrow is a day at sea as we make our way south to Sydney, Australia.