

Welcome TO OUR SPRING EDITION

Spring is in the air and the warmer weather has certainly been welcome. The Coopers Travel team have continued to remain busy with a positive surge in travel, in between welcoming new staff, saying farewell to old staff and escorting trips around Australia. We actually can't believe where the time has gone, before we know it, you will be reading our Christmas edition.

STAFF NEWS

Georgia had her goodbye send off and we were very sad to see her go, however, she is enjoying some warmer weather up north with her partner and visiting many areas where she sent her clientele. They happened to share some very exciting news when Georgia's partner Ben proposed to her on Cable Beach which certainly took her by surprise.



Jenny Kater has just come back from escorting a trip to Broome. This Broome Getaway was a great 5 day escape from the Winter chills and Broome certainly didn't disappoint. Jenny and partner Paul even managed to win back some money on the Broome Cup - Calcutta the Friday night before the Broome Cup!

Amanda Kennedy has returned to Coopers Travel a couple of days per week to help out our team. Amanda has been busy raising her 3 children. We are extremely grateful to Amanda for her return after years of constant requests to walk back in the office. We are hoping that she is enjoying being back with team on a casual basis.

Abbey Alvin is off on an APT river cruise to Vietnam and Cambodia which she is very much looking forward to. Watch this space to hear all about it in the next newsletter edition.

We would like to welcome our new staff member Leigh Serowka. Leigh is a welcomed breath of fresh air and with her knowledge and experience within the travel industry we are very excited to have her as part of the Coopers Travel team. Be sure to pop in and introduce yourself to Leigh.

Hi Travellers, I'm Leigh.

Before starting here at Coopers I was a Travel Consultant for two years for STA Travel UK in London's Covent Garden store. I also lived in Florida,

America, working for Walt Disney World, making unforgettable moments for families on a daily basis. For the last couple years I've been settled in Bairnsdale, my fiancée's hometown, and love the relaxed lifestyle East Gippsland offers. You may recognise me from walking around town with my little golden Labrador puppy or from behind the bar at Ozmex Restaurant in town.



Japan has to be my all time favourite destination! The rich culture and history, the delicious flavourful food and the welcoming locals. I'm always happy to talk about my trip here. My favourite tours have been 3 weeks through the Canadian Rockies with Contiki - hiking, biking and kayaking my way through the mountain rivers and spotting moose. I've also been on an extraordinary safari to see the "Wildlife Big 5" across the national parks of Botswana, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa with G Adventures. It's so important to



challenge yourself in life, so my biggest adventure has been climbing Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, raising over \$5000 for the Meningitis Research Foundation. One other memorable experience has been a 5 day Indian wedding celebration in Mangaluru - nothing quite prepares you for the extravagant celebrations and true local cuisine of India.

The next exciting adventures coming up for me include a Virgin Voyages cruise next year and a festive stopover New York before heading to London for Christmas with my family. A country I'm so excited to dive into one day is New Zealand and see Māori culture firsthand. I also always love to incorporate wildlife into my travels as much as possible so hopefully one day I will explore the Galapagos Islands.

We have an amazing team here who have welcomed me like family, come see us anytime to plan your dream trip. I'll be in store Monday to Friday from now on.

'Travel for the moments that take your breath away'

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAVEL INSURANCE

There is always a heavy discussion around travel insurance within our office and often leads to confusion amongst our clients. Whilst this is quite a mundane topic, it is a necessity when travelling. Here is some valuable information about why travel insurance is so important.

Travel doesn't always go as planned. If you're going overseas, travel insurance is as important as a passport. Without it, you or your family could suffer financially if things go wrong. No matter who you are, where you're going and what you're doing, get insurance.

Travel insurance is especially important if you need medical assistance. Healthcare overseas can be very expensive. Most countries won't give you free care, or subsidise the cost of your care. You, or your insurer, must usually pay full price.

Be aware that you may not be covered if something happens to you as a result of an excluded activity. For example, most policies cover a broken bone. However, if you broke your leg skiing and your cover specifically excluded skiing, you won't be covered.

It's unlikely an insurer will cover you if you go to a destination where the advice level is 'Do not travel'.

Getting cover for your pre-existing condition

If you have a pre-existing condition, you may face challenges getting insurance that covers it. You may need to find a specialised insurer.

You may need a policy that covers you for situations that aren't connected to your condition.

If you don't get insurance and can't pay for medical assistance

Be aware that hospitals in some countries will refuse to give you medical assistance if you don't pay upfront, or hand over your insurance details. Even if it means you might die.

In an emergency, hospitals in countries with a reciprocal health care agreement may treat you. However, you may still have to pay some of your costs. You should still get travel insurance. Hospitals in other countries may treat you, then give you an invoice to pay.

If you don't have travel insurance, you'll have to pay for your treatment.

The Australian Government can't pay your bills.

Covering the cost of cancellations and delays

Plans change. Travel insurance can cover cancellation costs if you need to change your plans.

Find out what's covered for cancellations and delays. Read the product disclosure statement (PDS) before you buy your policy.

When insurers may cover cancellation costs

Most travel insurance policies can cover your costs if you need to cancel your trip. Some may cover you if:

- we raise the advice level to 'Reconsider your need to travel' or 'Do not travel'
- you or someone you care for gets seriously sick, or a family member dies

- you were going overseas to study and your course is cancelled
- you have an emergency situation at home or work (e.g. fire, flood or burglary) in the days before you leave
- you fall pregnant before you go and your doctor says you can't travel

Common exclusions for cancellation cover

Most insurers won't cover cancellation costs if:

- you're cancelling because of a situation that was known about before you bought your policy
- our advice level was already at 'Reconsider your need to travel' or 'Do not travel'
- you're cancelling due to a mental health issue or episode
- there's a demonstration, war or terrorist incident in your destination unless we raise our advice level to 'Do Not Travel'
- there's a pandemic, epidemic or natural disaster in your destination unless we raise our advice level to 'Do Not Travel'
- your tour company or airline makes a mistake with your booking, or goes out of business

Credit card travel insurance

Some credit cards come with complimentary (free) travel insurance. Before you default to the free option, make sure you understand what it covers, for how much and what you must do to activate it.

Check how your free credit card travel insurance policy compares

What credit card travel insurance can cover

Credit card usually provide basic cover for some medical emergencies, cancellations and problems with your baggage and valuables.

They're different from most comprehensive policies. Often, they cover fewer situations and have lower item limits. Before you go with the free option, read the PDS. Compare it to one from a comprehensive policy so you understand what you'll be covered for.

Activating credit card insurance

You usually have to 'activate' the insurance policy. Often, this is by booking your trip using that card. Some may consider your policy activated when you:

- use the card, or your card's reward points, to book your return flights
- you pay a particular portion of your trip on it
- manually activate the policy via internet banking or contacting the bank

Before you choose to go with the free option, make sure you confirm with your bank how to activate it. Don't assume its activated, you could find yourself overseas without insurance when you need it.

Keep in mind that not all policies cover all things, in all countries, in all situations. You need to make sure you choose a travel insurance policy that suits your needs.

If you can't afford insurance, you can't afford to travel.

TRAVEL APPS

We are living in such a technology world these days and it can become very overwhelming with so many different travel apps out there. However, we have had many clients report on the travel app POLAR STEPS! Polar Steps is a travel tracker app, which helps you to plan, track and

relive your trips in a smart and beautiful way. You can share your experiences with your friends and family and at the end of your journey you can make a photo book. Your photo book displays your route, travel stats, thoughts and photos, which makes for a great a coffee table book. Visit

www.polarsteps.com to learn more about this travel app.



OUR VALUED CLIENTS

Amanda & Cory Kennedy braved a family holiday to the USA with their young children, before Amanda returned to Coopers Travel on a casual basis. Here is a snippet of their family holiday! She is one brave lady taking this on!

Deep South of the USA: Family edition

Certainly not the first destination that comes to mind when you think "family holiday", but with friends in Alabama, we took the opportunity to pull on our cowboy boots and dig our heels into the South West of North America.



To make things as easy as

possible with 2 adults, 3 kids aged 11, 9 and 5, we chose the direct Melbourne - Dallas Fort Worth (Texas) flight with Qantas. This avoided the usual option of transiting through LAX. We then connected with American Airlines to Atlanta, Georgia.

Upon arrival we overnighted close to the Atlanta airport, where we used the free shuttle to and from the airport. Fresh the next morning, we collected our rental car with Dollar rental. The process was easy. Driving on the wrong side of the road was also easy (from the passenger seat.) But with the assistance of Siri, we navigated out of the airport and through the cities with ease.

From here the adventure began! We travelled through the southern states of Georgia, Alabama, and down to Florida where we tackled Disneyworld! From here we took a locals suggestion to head to Crystal River, Florida. It is the manatee capital of the world, and we had a great time swimming in crystal clear waters with these amazing creatures. Clicking over a few more miles we headed to Nashville and onto the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. Rounding out our month-long Deep South American experience was driving the states of Mississippi, Louisiana and finishing in Texas.

Thinking of travelling to the US? Here are my highlights and tips:

- Live sports! Check the local calendars for anything your family is into - or try something new.
- We booked Supercross tickets prior to departing for Atlanta Motor Speedway.
- Rodeo at Fort Worth Stockyards
- Basketball, Baseball, Ice Hockey and Football all run to seasons and it's best to book tickets in advance.
- As country music fans, crossing the Florida/Georgia Line was a pretty cool experience, but Nashville is on a whole new level. We have been asked many times if you can do Nashville with kids? The short answer is Absolutely!
- Fireworks shops. Located on the side of the road, they are completely legal to buy and set-off in most Southern states. We took advantage of "buy 1, get 3 free" deals.

- Alligators. Be aware! They live in these parts of the world.
- Shopping - The exchange rate kept us at bay a little, but we loved the shopping! We left Australia with 2 suitcases, returned with 6!
- Disneyworld - I could do a whole essay on Disneyworld, let's just say it was a highlight.
- BassPro shops - If you see one, you must go. Each one has it's own mega-sized aquarium.
- Orlando area - We only stayed here for Disneyworld, but Orlando is a holiday in itself. If you love the Gold Coast, you need to visit Orlando.
- Crystal River - The Manatee capital of the world. There are just some things you need to experience to believe and swimming with huge manatees in their natural environment is one.
- Smoky Mountains /Gatlinburg - This area is stunning. We initially thought three days in the Smokies would be nice and relaxing - but we were wrong. We spent our time riding chair lifts up amazing mountains and driving through forest roads looking for wild black bear.
- Great Wolf Lodge - Our 9 year old daughter found Great Wolf Lodge on YouTube. It is a Wolf/Wildlife themed, indoor water park resort! We surprised her with a visit on her Birthday. They have numerous locations in North America so definitely look them up if your family is travelling to this side of the world.
- Fort Worth Stockyards - Located just out of Dallas, Texas you will find the largely touristy area of the Stockyards. But don't let that put you off, all 5 of us loved this place. From the Country-fair like atmosphere to the long-horned bulls and line dancing in the streets, its a must-do visit in Texas.

General Tips for travelling internationally with kids:

- Their own bag for the plane - Colouring, eye mask, lip balm, lolly pops, device, headphones and charger.
- They will argue about the window seat.
- Least amount of luggage as possible! It's much easier to get around if you have minimal luggage. Holding kids hands in airports, trying to fit into rental cars, rolling cases - it's best done lightly.
- Write a wish list. We had a list on the fridge for months prior. Every time we saw or heard of something in America, we would add it to the list. By the time we got close we had a fair idea of what we wanted to achieve and what our kids were not necessarily interested in. As a family, we try to select destination-specific activities and sightseeing like Honky Tonk dancing in Nashville, instead of the zoo.

I could write and talk for days on travelling with kids, and of course all the details of our experience but my best advice is to remember: "It's all part of the adventure..."

We would love to hear about your journeys also, so please be sure to tell us about your adventures on your return!

SHARES WANTED:

Female Shares:

- Flinders Ranges & Proud Mary
- 20 Day Grand Pacific Rail, Cruise & Coach

If anyone wants to go on a trip and would like a share, please let us know and we will try and find a suitable match.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Solo Travellers Catch Up

Wednesday 29th November

The Bairnsdale Club at 2:30pm

Come and enjoy a cuppa, cake and catch up before the year comes to a close.

GIPPSLAND Departures

Including return transport from Bairnsdale & surrounds

2023 GIPPSLAND DEPARTURES

Sep 17	16 Day Fully Escorted Tour Iconic Pubs of the Outback *SOLD OUT*
Sep 27	9 Day Fully Escorted Perth Explorer & Indian Pacific *SOLD OUT*
Oct 26	6 Day Mystery Getaway *SOLD OUT*
Oct 28	Grand Princess Cruise - 14 Day/13 Nights Queensland Coastal ex Melbourne
Nov 23	4 Day Mystery Getaway – Let Coopers Travel whisk you away on a little Australian getaway without knowing where you are going! *SOLD OUT*

2024 PROPOSED GIPPSLAND DEPARTURES:

Register your Interest now for 2024 Gippsland Departures. We are still busy working on these tours and putting them together. We can't stress enough how important it is to register your interest for these proposed itineraries. Whilst it may seem some time off, we have seen such a high demand for things that are booked out well in advance and we are trying to avoid disappointment. There will certainly be more groups added as the year goes by, so be sure to let us know if there is a tour that you are interested in.

January 22	Grand Princess Cruise – 07 Night Southern Australia Explorer ex Melbourne
March 17	12 Day Travelmarvel Essential Vietnam & Cambodia – Siem Reap to Ho Chi Minh City *LIMITED AVAILABILITY*
April 17	20 Day Grand Pacific New Zealand Tour – Rail, Cruise & Coach *LIMITED AVAILABILITY*
April 20	Flinders & King Island including Launceston
May 18	8 Day Ultimate Kangaroo Island Tour
August	Mystery Getaway
August 26	Flinders Ranges & Proud Mary *RESCHEDULED FROM 2023 – secure your spot ASAP with a deposit before November 2023.
October	8 Days Hilltops & Floriade Canberra The Ghan Northbound - Adelaide to Darwin
November	Norfolk Island

2025 PROPOSED GIPPSLAND DEPARTURES:

Whilst 2025 seems some time off, we know that the below destinations are already booked out for 2024 and there is a need to get in early for these destinations. Therefore, we have started our 2025 groups, so please register your interest or book now to avoid disappointment for these hitlist destinations.

March	16 Day Japan Discovery Bunnik Tour – Experience the sights and colours of the cherry blossom in Japan
April	Small Group Canada & Alaska
September	Scandinavia

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING OUR LISTED GIPPSLAND DEPARTURES:

Due to the popularity on many of our tours, more especially the small group tours we are now asking that should you wish to ensure that you have confirmed your spot on any of our Gippsland Departures that an initial \$250.00p.p. refundable deposit be lodged with our office. This refundable deposit confirms your spot on tours until such time as you receive a copy of our fully confirmed Itinerary and Costing. Once you confirm your decision to proceed with a full reservation and pay any additional deposit required, normal terms and conditions apply and deposits become non-refundable.

We continue to urge clients to register interest in any of our tours, as this assists us in our initial planning of these departures, and there is no deposit required unless you specifically wish to ensure you have space confirmed on a first in basis. This has come about due to the high demand on certain tours.