

Welcome TO OUR AUTUMN EDITION

Happy New Year to all who are reading this and welcome to our first 2025 newsletter. It is exciting that we have managed to start the New Year back at work in our new office space. The team are feeling revitalised and are enjoying showing our clients the fresh new working environment.

STAFF NEWS

We would like to welcome another new staff member Jess Wood onboard. Jess is originally a UK girl and has worked in travel previously. She now resides in Bairnsdale with her Aussie husband. Jess has been fortunate enough to travel extensively. We are lucky to have Jess join the team and look forward to seeing what her wealth of knowledge brings to Coopers.



Hi, my name is Jessica Wood and I am very excited to be joining the Coopers Travel team. I am originally from the UK in the West Midlands and have been lucky enough to do a lot of travelling before settling in Australia with my Aussie husband. I have a brief background in travel having worked for TUI (previously Thomsons) and Long Travel (an independent travel company specialising in Italy) in the UK.

I have enjoyed many city breaks and beach holidays across Europe, road-tripped across America & Canada, worked at a summer camp in America in Upstate New York for 3 months, swum with dolphins in the Bahamas and walked with lions in Mauritius.

My favourite destination is the USA, and particularly New York City where I have been multiple times. I love the hustle and bustle of NYC, the steam coming out of the pavements, the polite customer service in every shop along Fifth Avenue, taking leisurely strolls along the high line, grabbing a pizza slice and looking at the bright lights of Times Square, inwardly revelling in the interesting things you see on the New York City subway system, being captivated by the incredible views of the concrete jungle from the top of the Empire State building or the Rockefeller Centre and enjoying the culture at one of NYC's many museums (the dinosaurs at the History Museum are awesome) or art galleries (I've visited the MoMA where you can see Van Gogh's Starry Night - don't get too close though, you'll get told off - as my mum and I discovered as my mum nearly pressed her nose against it) or watching a theatre show

on Broadway of which I've seen Hairspray or catching the Staten Island ferry to get a glimpse of the Statue of Liberty and marvelling at the grandeur of Grand Central Station.

I have been lucky enough to go to NYC over Christmas with friends and take a beautiful brisk Winter walk and horse and carriage ride through Central Park and the last time I visited in 2019, I even managed to get an exclusive booking (it books out within minutes) to have Breakfast at Tiffany's which was an amazing experience to share with my mum. There is a magic to this over the top, noisy, busy city that you don't get anywhere else in the world.

I can't wait to get started and I look forward to helping you plan your exciting next adventure and hearing all about your dream trip when you get home.

Jo Montgomery travelled to Portugal with Collette Tours back in November with a stopover in Dubai. She really enjoyed her adventure with Collette Tours and felt that they were a great fit for our cliental.

"Sunny Portugal and Dubai"

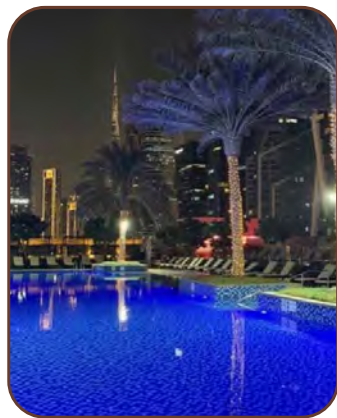
In November I was lucky enough to travel to Portugal with Collette Travel and Tours. Arriving into Lisbon, we explored the historic streets, experienced an evening of traditional Fado music, tried a famous Portuguese Custard Tart and visited the UNESCO listed Belem Tower. We then ventured out into the countryside, visiting a cork factory, wineries, a ceramics factory and visiting a few of the walled medieval towns, beautifully lit up with their Christmas Markets! Heading further south we



arrived in the Algarve region, which included a boat cruise to see the caves and then headed to Monchique where we had a picnic looking out over the Mountain villages (my personal highlight from the tour!) Heading back to Lisbon, we spent our last couple of nights in the suburb of Cascais, a beautiful alternative location to

the hustle and bustle of the city but still only 25 minutes from the airport. From Cascais, we visited the summer home of the Portuguese Kings in Sintra and enjoyed some time exploring the cobblestoned streets.

Flying with Emirates allowed me to have a 2 night stopover in Dubai on the return journey. I explored the old and new cities, visited the Dubai Mall and was in awe of the largesse and glitz that Dubai is well known for!



Dubai - JW Marriott Hotel



Cape Roca, the Westernmost point of mainland Europe

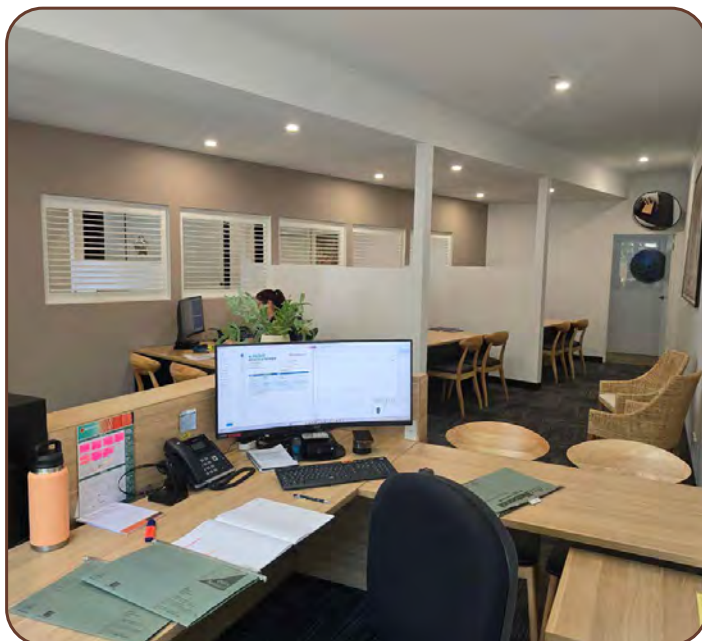
Abbey Alvin is heading off to Egypt in March with Bunnik Tours. This is an amazing opportunity for Abbey to test drive Bunnik Tours which are a fantastic small group touring company. Jen Morris has been to Sri Lanka with Bunnik in the past and has always commended their product. Our clients that have travelled with Bunnik also come back with more than positive comments about the small group touring company. We are looking forward to hearing how Abbey has enjoyed their product upon her return.

Jenny Morris is finishing up for her maternity leave at the end of the February. She isn't taking on anymore bookings or quotations. Jen will ensure that all her valued clients and files will be well looked after and distributed amongst our capable team. She is certainly looking forward to a little break with her family, before baby number 2 arrives at the end of March, early April. We are looking forward to baby Marchi's arrival. What do you think Jen might be having?

OUR NEW OFFICE SPACE

Our long overdue scheduled maintenance and renovation has all been completed in record time. We are extremely grateful to all those that visited us in our temporary office setup and put up with the noise that we endured over a period of 5 weeks. We are also grateful for your patience on the closure days that we had to move in and out of the temporary space. Bill & Lynne, Jenny Morris & Kathleen are also thankful to our staff for putting in the extra mile with moving and working under a loud and messy environment to make this happen. The wait, inconvenience and noise was all worth it and we are all very proud of the new space. We would like to thank all the local trade businesses that went above and beyond in making this happen in such a short period of time and with such attention to detail:

- BROOKERS BUILDERS
- CR STEWART ELECTRICAL
- ULTRA BLINDS
- WORKSPACE SOLUTIONS
- WEBSTERS FURNITURE
- SIGNLINE
- DYNAMIC WINDOWS
- CARPETWORLD



WIN A CABIN BAG OF YOUR CHOICE

GUESS THE BABY, PLACE YOUR BABY BETS?



You have a chance to win a cabin bag of your choice. Simply, write down:

- The gender of Jen Morris' baby
- The weight of the baby (in pound or kg)
- Your name, phone number & email address

Either email your entry to admin@cooperstravel.com or drop your entry into the office for your chance to win a cabin bag once Baby Marchi arrives. The winner will be contacted



TRIP A DEAL, LUXURY ESCAPES VS BOOKING WITH YOUR TRUSTED TRAVEL AGENT

We are always getting asked "We have seen this Trip A Deal and would like to do the same!" or "Luxury Escapes have a fantastic offer and we would like you to book it, can you do this?" Whilst these companies are seen to offer great holiday deals and at times they can be too good to miss, we can even admit this, but there are differences which can impact your booking and holiday experience. They often appear cheap, but then can come at a cost.

Trip A Deal is simply a website, clients can purchase what they require, but once you have clicked the ok button and entered your payment details, that is where the service ends. If you require to make any changes, you have questions, need support or additional information, you aren't able to access the required support. Yes it may appear cheaper but it often comes at a cost, when you don't pay for dedicated staff to provide customer service or resolutions. The reality is if any client that books on Trip A Deal requires any help throughout the booking and holiday experience and would like a human to speak to if the unexpected happens, then they won't get it from Trip A Deal, but they will from their trusted travel agent.

As for Luxury Escapes, they will tell you themselves, they are a tech company that sells travel. They are not a travel company, and they never plan on being one. More and more of their business is going to be fed to the app and website and again, like Trip a Deal, they have a place in the market for the point and click client, but for the loyal customer base who do require attention to detail, guidance and reassurance, these sites are not for them. Luxury Escapes provide a customer service team who will book the exact trip you ask for but again, if anything goes wrong, if the customer requires anything extra, if they want a human touch, then Luxury Escapes is not for them.

Coopers Travel are an ATAS travel agency business. The Australian Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is the peak body for Australian travel businesses. We administer the Australian Travel Accreditation Scheme (ATAS). Accredited businesses are held accountable to elevated standards of service delivery and professionalism when they are an ATAS Agency.



The Value of Professional Fees Your Journey, Their Expertise

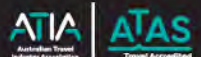
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We're here to shed light on why ATAS Accredited travel businesses charge non-refundable professional fees and how their service benefits you throughout your journey.

- **Expertise & Local Knowledge:** ATAS Accredited tour operators are dedicated teams of travel experts who possess in-depth knowledge of destinations, attractions and local customs. Their expertise help you make the most out of your trip, ensuring you visit the must-see places and experience the best activities.
- **Time-Saving:** Travel planning can be time-consuming. Engaging with an ATAS Accredited tour operator will save you hours of research, booking, and organisation. As your dedicated Tour Operator, they will take care of the planning and logistics of your journey.
- **Safety & Security:** ATAS Accredited travel businesses prioritise your safety during your trip. They choose reputable accommodations, transportation and tour guides, ensuring your trips are memorable and stress-free.
- **Support:** In the event of disruptions, cancellations, or unexpected challenges during your journey, your ATAS Accredited tour operator is available, ready to assist you.
- **Exclusive Access:** ATAS Accredited tour operators have partnerships with local vendors who can often grant you access to unique experiences and attractions that may not be readily available to the general public.
- **Peace of Mind:** The ATAS Accredited tour operator fees support their commitment to ensuring your experience is expertly curated during the planning stage of your journey, allowing you to enjoy your experience from beginning to the end. Your tour operator will provide timely, insightful and professional guidance through each step of the journey.
- **Savings:** By leveraging our industry relationships, partnerships with local vendors and expertise, ATAS Accredited tour operators often save you money in the long run.
- **Reduced Stress:** During your trip, if any issues arise or if you need assistance, the ATAS Accredited tour operator's support team can help you resolve the problem and provide guidance promptly.
- **Value-Added Services:** By booking through an ATAS Accredited tour operator you gain access to a range of travel services that go beyond standard bookings, including expertise and local knowledge.
- **Code of Conduct:** ATAS Accredited Businesses are bound by the rigorous ATAS Code of Conduct, and in the event that you have any concerns or grievances you have the opportunity to escalate your concerns directly through to our association for review and investigation.

When planning a trip, the ATAS symbol tells you the travel business you're dealing with is credible, well-trained and professional. They've met strict criteria to become nationally accredited, so you can book with them knowing you're in the safe hands of one of the best in the business.

Suite 3, Level 31, 31 Market Street Sydney NSW 2000 T 02 9287 9900 W www.atia.travel or www.atas.com.au ABN 72 001 444 275



Upcoming Events



GRAND PACIFIC NEW ZEALAND highlighting our October 2025 Gippsland Departure

Date: Wednesday 26th February 2025
Time: 5:30pm

Location: The Riversleigh, 1 Nicholson Street, Bairnsdale

RSVP: Wednesday 19th February 2025 to 03 5152 6533 or email admin@cooperstravel.com



SOLO TRAVELLERS INDIA SOLO TRIP WITH TITAN

Date: Wednesday 05th March 2025

Time: 5:00pm

Location: The Bairnsdale Club, Function Room, 68 Nicholson Street, Bairnsdale

RSVP: Monday 24th February 2025 to 03 5152 6533 or email admin@cooperstravel.com



APT/TRAVELMARVEL

Our annual APT/TravelMarvel information evening is upon us again. Please join us to see what they have install for 2025/2026 season, highlighting our proposed Canada/Alaska 2026 group.

Date: Wednesday 26th March 2025

Time: 6:00pm

Location: Bairnsdale Bowls Club, 26D Grant Street, Bairnsdale

RSVP: Wednesday 19th March 2025 to 03 5152 6533 or email admin@cooperstravel.com

Gippsland Departures

Including return transport from Bairnsdale & surrounds

2025 GIPPSLAND DEPARTURES NOW SELLING:

Our 2025 & 2026 Gippsland Departures are now available and selling. We are still adding tours to the list as the allotment opens up. Please note that we have had to cancel a few Gippsland Departures i.e. Canada & Alaska, along with Scandinavia. We put these tours together due to the extensive list of interested clients. However, when it was time to commit with a deposit, we found that our clients no longer wanted to do these trips, which left us having to either pay a large non refundable deposits in hope that we fill the trip, or make the difficult decision to cancel the trip because a large non refundable deposit is hard to loose for a small regional agency.

The below Gippsland Departures for 2025 are already selling out. So please secure your spot by contacting the Coopers team. Keep an eye out on our email blasts & social media for new tours that are being added to 2026 tours.

- March 28** 16 Day Japan Discovery Bunnik Tour - Experience the sights and colours of the cherry blossom in Japan
***SOLD OUT**
- April 19** Tasmania ***LAST AVAILABILITY**
- May 04** Ghan Expedition - Darwin to Adelaide ***LAST AVAILABILITY**
- May 26** Brisbane, Longreach & Winton - 9 Days/8 Nights ***STILL SELLING**
- June 18** 7 Day/6 night Mystery Getaway ***LAST TWIN/DOUBLE & SINGLE ALLOTMENT AVAILABLE**
- July 16** Australian Air Safari's - 4 Day Taste of the Outback ***FLYING OUT OF BAIRNSDALE - LAST 2 SPOTS AVAILABLE**
- August 05** 11 Day Cairns, Cape York Including Horn Island Fly/Drive Heritage 4WD Tours
***SOLD OUT - JOIN THE WAITLIST FOR ANY POSSIBLE CANCELLATIONS**
- August 29** Scandinavia ***CANCELLED DUE TO NOT REACHING NUMBERS IN OUR ALLOCATED TIME**
- September 28** Indian Pacific - Perth to Sydney including some Perth highlights
- October 13** Grand Pacific New Zealand 20 Day Signature Rail, Cruise & Coach
- October 19** Vintage Rail Journeys - Golden West Rail Tour from Sydney

2026 PROPOSED GIPPSLAND DEPARTURES:

Please note that 2026 Gippsland Departures are being worked on. If any of the below prospectives are of interest to you, we can't stress enough the importance of registering your details for a tour that is of interest. This is because our allotment is either allocated or if we don't get minimum numbers, then we may cancel before we have to pay large deposits.

- March 11** **SOLO TRAVELLERS ONLY** - Titan - 16 Day The Great Indian Rail Journey with Titan
***Our first dedicated solo travellers Gippsland Departure - NOW SELLING**
- March 28** PS Australian Star on Murray River ***New Paddlesteamer - NOW SELLING**
Travelmarvel Canada & Alaska ***Date to be confirmed**
- May 23** The Ghan Northbound - Adelaide to Darwin
***Ghan allotment has been secured, still working on arrangements around the Ghan**
- October 03** The Ghan Expedition - Darwin to Adelaide including Top End touring
- October** Auckland & Norfolk Island
- December 04** Great Southern Rail - Adelaide to Brisbane
Bunnik Sri Lanka ***Dates yet to be released**

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.