

## **Australian Natural Adventures – Feedback**

Hi Andrew. We had a lot to say so decided to do this with word rather than on the feedback paper form you sent us.

Name: Susan and Ronald

Destination: Australia and New Zealand

Departure Date: October 10, 2009

### Pre-Trip:

Timeliness: Very good. Andrew was always available via several avenues of communication: e-mail, Skype, and phone. He always got back to us quickly and answered all our questions and concerns.

Itinerary: The detail of the itinerary was wonderful. We knew what to expect, how long things should take, etc.

Cost: The final cost was right on.

Materials: These came on time and we appreciated that there were several iterations as we went back and forth with the planning and made various changes. The final materials were very informative and prepared us really well for what to expect. We appreciated knowing about tipping (or lack thereof) and other basic cultural differences with the USA. The packing list was right on. We took your advice and packed fewer clothes that we originally thought we would. It made our transfers so much easier to have a manageable weighted bag. The information about boomerangs and digerydos was also great.

### During the trip:

Air Itinerary: Our flights were all on time and fit into the rest of the itinerary well. We would have liked to have a shorter layover in Los Angeles on the return trip. However, if there had been any unanticipated delays we may well have needed the extra time. This is where being able to trust Andrew's experience gave us confidence.

Airlines: The service and flight attendants for Qantas and Air New Zealand were really friendly. The meals were very good. Our return flight from Auckland to Los Angeles was not at all full, so we got a whole row of 4 seats to ourselves and were able to stretch out and sleep during the flight. The flights between Seattle and Los Angeles were operated by Alaska so the service for those was pretty good too.

Organization: When we first got the itinerary, we were concerned that there was not enough time between our Cairn flight landing time and our pickup for the Wait a While Atherton tablelands tour. But in fact there was plenty of time and we actually had some time to relax in the room after we checked into the hotel. Kudos to you for knowing the airports and towns and tours so well! Also, at first we thought our morning tours at O'Reilly's started kind of early, but we were awake and bright eyed for all of them way before they were scheduled. Again, kudos for understanding jet lag!

**Hotels:** The hotels were even better than we expected. The room at O'Reilly's had a spectacular territorial view and we could watch kangaroos and birds from our private deck. The Rydges hotel in Cairns was a really great location, very close to restaurants and our tour to the Great Barrier Reef. We could walk to everything in only a few minutes. But the best part was that Andrew knew about the high tide and the birding opportunity right across the street! A truly amazing experience with the birds so close you didn't really even need binoculars. All the hotels had good guest laundry facilities, so we were able to do our own laundry several times, which we needed since we had packed the minimum amount of clothes.

**Meals:** Meals on the Qantas flights were quite good. The breakfasts that came with several of the hotels were fabulous! We really enjoyed the eggs, bacon, sausage, broiled tomatoes and mushrooms – YUM! (It's a good thing we had lots of tours and walking to do! Ron actually lost 7 pounds and Susan didn't gain anything.) The dinner on the Wait A While tour was also very good. It was a family restaurant in a small town, specializing in Swiss/Italian cuisine. Very tasty. Lunch on the Great Barrier Reef tour was also very good: fresh seafood, cheese, bread, fruit.

**Activities:** The activities really exceeded our expectations. The physical beauty of the areas around O'Reilly's and Cairns was a joy to experience. Just getting from one place to the next was great as well as enjoying the activities at each location.

**Operators:** The tour bus operators were without exception on time, well informed, professional, courteous and best of all, humorous! We enjoyed their great commentaries as we were transferred from place to place.

**Pace:** The pace was just right. We had plenty of time to get from place to place as well as time to enjoy each activity. We got a lot done in a relatively short period of time.

**Guides:** All the guides were very professional and extremely knowledgeable. Many of the guides at O'Reilly's had worked there for over 25 years, so really knew where in the forest to find various wild life as well as amazing rainforest plants. We really liked our Wait a While Tour guide, Levi, who took us on the tour of the Atherton Tablelands. This was probably our favorite tour since we were the only folks on the tour and had his undivided attention. We also saw a really wide variety of flora and fauna and they also supplied very good binoculars for us to use. One really unique experience was using huge flashlights for spotting and viewing nocturnal animals. The Passions of Paradise tour operators for our Great Barrier Reef diving experience were also very professional. We were glad to be on one of the smaller boats and had fun getting to know several couples from England and Ireland. The dive instructors were very helpful and very understanding of less experienced and anxious customers (Susan). They made the experience fun and enjoyable.

#### General Comments:

We would rate this trip the maximum 4 stars: everything went as expected to very high standards and we would repeat and recommend this trip to others.

Yes, you may use our comments in your literature with our initials and city. Yes, you may use us as a reference and give our phone number and e-mail addresses to potential clients after confirming our permission at the time.