

## GRAND TROPICAL TOP TOUR B OCTOBER 2010 ITINERARY

- Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> The tour party gathers in Brisbane today for a stay at the Holiday Inn Roma Street which is adjacent to and above the Roma Street Station. If you are arriving in Brisbane today then if you catch the train from the Brisbane Airport it will deliver you right to the Hotel at Roma Street. Simply come out of the station turn left on Roma Street and the Hotel lobby entrance is just 50 metres along the footpath. Simple! You will be pleased with this quality Hotel.
- Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> Today we meet up with our Railcar RM 1901 from the Queensland Railways (QR) Heritage fleet normally based at Ipswich near Brisbane. Over the next six days this Railcar will take us up the coast the 1700kms to Cairns. A mixture of QR staff and volunteers from our kindred organisation, the Australian Railway Historical Society, look after us for this journey. There will be lunch stops each day and refreshments will also be available on board. From our hotel we walk the short distance to the Roma Street platforms to join our train. We run North through the suburbs of Brisbane and follow the electric services as far north as Nambour. You will note along the way that three and four track mainlines are needed here to cope with the commuter traffic.  
We arrive at Gympie near mid-day and this afternoon we take the Mary Valley Railway *Red Rocket* Railcar to Imbil and return.  
Tonight we stay in Gympie.
- Monday 18 A mid-morning start today and the Railcar takes us on a couple of hours run up the coast to Maryborough. A local afternoon tour will show you some of the sights locally and you will have time to look around Maryborough where we stay for the night.
- Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> The rail journey today is a long one at nearly 400km. There will be a lunch stop and we will see numerous coal trains and various sorts of agriculture. Approaching Rockhampton we will move above the Tropic of Capricorn and so will officially be in the Tropics and at this time of year we should be enjoying pleasant weather. Another local tour this afternoon.  
We stay tonight in the centre of Rockhampton.
- Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> Today as we leave Rockhampton the railway line goes up the middle of Archer Street for several kilometres in a way that would make Kawakawa quite jealous. We will see some serious sized coal trains today on our way to Mackay, some 330kms away. There are some serious sized rivers too, and bridges to match. Local tour on arrival and we stay at Mackay for the night.
- Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> From Mackay to Townsville today it is a slightly longer trip at 385kms. Plenty to see today including the start of the various extensive cane railway systems that now stretch from here to Cairns.  
Tonight at Townsville we stay at the Holiday Inn Towers and after the local tour you will find plenty of local places to eat.

- Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> Sugar cane is going to be the predominant sight today with sugar mills dotting the countryside and the little cane railways seem to be everywhere. It is 300kms to Cairns today and tonight will be the first of our five nights we stay in this town. (Three and two). Rydges is our hotel on the Esplanade and you will certainly be pleased with the accommodation and the location. Cairns is just full of places to eat ranging from the cheap and cheerful to the classy. The choice will be yours.
- Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> This is a free day for you to explore Cairns, go to Kuranda on the train, ride the Sky Train over the Rainforest or out to the Barrier Reef on a cruise. There is no end to the touristy things you can do. Dinner tonight is again your choice and we are sure you will fill in your day.
- Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> Today we take you up to Port Douglas to ride on the Bally Hooley Steam Railway. Volunteers operate this line which is a portion of the old sugar cane tram to the Mossman Sugar Mill. We go to the Rainforest Habitat for lunch (included) and eat with the Lorikeets. There is time to have a look round Port Douglas and we return to Cairns late afternoon and dinner is your choice again.
- Monday 25<sup>th</sup> The coach which will be with us for the next six days will pick us up this morning and take us to the Cairns Railway Station in time to join the 9.30 gold class service to Kuranda. The coach will pick us up again at Kuranda and take us on to Ravenshoe for lunch and a ride on the Ravenshoe Railway. Finally today the coach will take us on to Mt Surprise for our overnight stay.
- Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> Today we join the coach and head for the Gulf of Carpentaria at Karumba (not to be confused with Kuranda where we were yesterday!) This afternoon we have a sunset cruise from the mouth of the Norman River where we watch the sun go down to the accompaniment of drinks and nibbles. We stay overnight at this delightful location.
- Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> The coach treks back to Normanton so we can join the *Gulflander* iconic train from Normanton to Croydon. The coach follows along and at Croydon it will pick us up, do a short local tour, (there is not too much to Croydon) and deliver us to our hotel for the night.
- Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> The coach will take us from Croydon to Georgetown for a lunch break and then on to the Cobbold Gorge where we will take a late afternoon cruise. We stay at the very pleasant Cobbold Village tonight and dinner is included.
- Friday 29<sup>th</sup> We return now to Forsayth this morning and here we join the *Savannahlander* for a wonderful two-step journey back to Cairns. The first stage today takes us to Mt Surprise where our coach will meet us and take us to the Undara Lava Caves. We have an afternoon tour of the caves and stay here tonight in the railway carriages accommodation at Undara.
- Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> It is back to the train this morning and the final leg of our journey on the *Savannahlander*. It is a fairly long day back to Cairns with an arrival about 6.30pm, but – oh joy! – on arrival there is our trusty coach to take us back to the Rydges Hotel for our final two nights here. Are you dining on the Esplanade tonight?
- Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> Sleep in this morning if you wish because this is a free day for you. There will still be other things you haven't done yet and I am sure you will fill in your time without any trouble. Tonight is your final night here.

Monday 1st November      Sadly, after breakfast, (included in your room rate), the tour ends and we each go our own way. I hope you have found it worthwhile.

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*Paul Heighton, Tour Organiser*

- Notes:
1. A lunch stop is included each day in the schedule.
  2. All breakfasts are included but other meals and lunches are only included in the fare where indicated on the booking form.
  3. Although it is officially winter in Queensland, at this time, the daytime temperatures can be expected to be in the mid to high 20s. It can however get cold at night in some places.
  4. This itinerary and accommodation details are subject to change. A full final itinerary together with the list of hotels and motels will be made available close to the starting date of the tour. At this point no major changes are expected.

**What is NOT included:**

- (a) Air fares, airport and government related passenger surcharges or taxes
- (b) Travel insurance, which is mandatory for all passengers
- (c) All personal expenditures, refreshments, Taxis, other travel and transfers, accommodation or related charges not specifically referred to in the itinerary as being included. All Visa fees.

19<sup>th</sup> November 2009