

Victorian Autumn Highlights

31
March
2011
10 Days

\$2162ppts
\$497s/s

Bright/Beechworth Autumn Colour, Mount Beauty Ballarat—Sovereign Hill & Blood on the Southern Cross, Bendigo—Tram Tour, Puffing Billy in the Dandenongs, Powerworks at Morwell, St Mary's at Bairnsdale 2 nights on Phillip Island, Penguins & Seals & Wildlife Park, Vietnam Memorial 2 nights at Lakes Entrance, incl a Cruise, South Coast of NSW

Day 1: Home—Wagga Wagga (LD)

Departing from the Hunter, we will pick up in Tuggerah, Hornsby and Strathfield before our lunch stop near Goulburn.

Country Comfort Wagga Wagga 02 6921 6444

Day 2: Wagga Wagga - Bright - Beechworth (BLD)

At Albury we will cross into Victoria and travel through the beautiful **Kiewa Valley to Mt Beauty**. We will travel across the picturesque **Tawonga Gap to Bright** through a carpet of Autumn leaves. **Local guides at both Bright and Beechworth** will show us the highlights of their autumn colour. Beechworth's wide streets and dignified public buildings remind us of days when the streets rang with the clamour and excitement of the gold rush and the Kelly Gang.

Carriage Motor Inn 03 5728 1830

Day 3: Beechworth—Bendigo—Ballarat (BLD)

We will head for Benalla and then to **Shepparton**, centre of the Goulburn Valley fruit growing area. Continuing westwards we reach Bendigo where the wealth of gold fields is still evident in their magnificent public buildings. After lunch we will have a tour of the town on **Bendigo's Famous Talking Tram**. At Ballarat tonight we will visit the spectacular **Blood on the Southern Cross Light and Sound Show at Sovereign Hill** which will bring to life the story of the Eureka Stockade.

Bell Tower Inn 03 5334 1600 (2 nights)

Day 4: Ballarat Town Tour & Sovereign Hill (BD)

A leisurely day today as we take in the beauty of Victoria's other golden city. We will have a town tour, visit **Lake Wendouree** and **Ballarat's Botanical Gardens**. Their beautifully presented garden beds highlight the **sculptures of Prime Ministers' Avenue**, and their newest addition the **Prisoner of War Memorial Wall**. In the afternoon we will visit **Sovereign Hill** where we can watch gold being poured, lollies being made, wood turning, visit the underground mine and browse in the shops and stroll the streets. You can even visit the gold museum (entry included in your ticket).

Day 5: Ballarat—Dandenong—Phillip Island (BLD)

Bypassing the city of Melbourne, we climb the hills to the **Dandenongs**, where beautiful gardens and European trees contrast with the bush, native ferns, creepers and the towering mountain ash of the rainforests. We will board the **Puffing Billy** to travel to Emerald, pulled by the only existing locomotive designed for narrow gauge railway. After lunch in the Dandenongs we will continue to **Phillip Island**, home of the motorbike races, fur seals and of course, **fairly penguins**.



*Banfields Phillip Island
03 5952 2486 (2 nights)*

Day 6: Explore Phillip Island (BD)

Today we will explore the Island, at **Rhyll Inlet** we will have an opportunity for a stroll along the boardwalk among the paperbacks and mangrove with the chance to spot birdlife. We will visit **Churchill Island Heritage Farm** which features heritage buildings, historic gardens and walking tracks. Lunch (own expense) will be at **Cowes** before we head to **San Remo** to visit the new **Vietnam War Memorial Museum** followed by a quick visit (and taste) at the **Chocolate Factory**. At **Nobbies Headland** a spectacular coastal boardwalk allows glimpses of the **seals**. Our day will be complete with a visit to the **Penguin Parade** to watch the penguins return to their young and burrows at dusk.



Day 7: Cowes—Gippsland —Lakes Entrance (BLD)

We will continue inland to the **Latrobe Valley**, where the world's largest deposits of brown coal are found. At **Powerworks** we will see an **open cut mine operation** and an explanation of the operations of the power station. At **Bairnsdale** we will view the extensive and spectacular wall and ceiling **murals of St Mary's Church**, before stopping at **Lakes Entrance** where we can see the carved trees that line the esplanade. We stay in Lakes Entrance on the Esplanade.

RSL Glengara Motel 03 5155 1555 (2 nights)

Day 8: Lakes Entrance—Cruise—Free Time (BL)

After a continental breakfast, we will have a leisurely day today with some time down the street to shop, **photograph the sculptures** or visit the Shell Museum (own expense). The highlight of Lakes Entrance will be our **boat cruise** on the **beautiful Gippsland Lakes with lunch at the local hotel in Metung**, returning to our motel mid afternoon. There will be an opportunity to experience one of the wide range of eateries for dinner tonight as you explore Lakes Entrance.

Day 9: Lakes Entrance—Eden—Bateman's Bay (BLD)

Today we cross the **Snowy River** at Orbost and have a stop at Cann River before we head into New South Wales. Eden and Merimbula open the way into the timber, cheese and dairying areas of Bega and the **historic village of Central Tilba**. Tonight we will stay in Bateman's Bay on the South Coast.

Bay Waters Inn Batemans Bay 02 4472 6333

Day 10: Bateman's Bay—Home (B)

We will stop at Berry for morning tea before free time and lunch (at your own expense) in the scenic town of **Kiama** (weather permitting we will view the Blowholes). We will head home through Strathfield and Hornsby.