

Our Final Week in Australia—Sydney

We drove from Canberra to Sydney (almost 200 miles) last Sunday across some beautiful rolling countryside that skirted the Blue Mountains to the south as we approached Australia's largest city. It was another gorgeous day with temperatures in the mid – to high 70s.

Shortly after arriving we met our niece Catherine and her two boys as well as her partner, Ben, who had traveled from their home 90 minutes north of the city to spend the afternoon with us. It was great to see them after a number of years and we spent time walking along the waterfront and past the Opera House. We also caught a glimpse of US Vice President Pence as he visited the Opera House as part of his Asia and Oceania trip.

Having spent about a week here on our last visit to Australia ten years ago we felt no obligation to “do” everything so we spent much of the week taking a somewhat slower look at places of interest and simply enjoying this very cosmopolitan city. The weather cooperated very well and we had generally warm and sunny days for our sightseeing, with just an occasional shower.



Of course we saw the Opera House and the Harbor Bridge (although this time we didn't climb as we had in 2007) and spent time in the area known as the Rocks, where the first settlements (mainly convicts) were established in what would ultimately be the beautiful city we were seeing.



We also took a self-guided walking tour of the oldest part of the city back from the waterfront where the first commercial businesses were founded in the late 1700s



and through the 19th and early 20th centuries. Many of the buildings from that era were gone, changed significantly or well hidden but we were guided through narrow alleys and streets and given information on the businesses that had been part of this area. It was fascinating to see what was still there and to imagine life in those early colonial days. It's a pity more cities don't provide the same information.



We also took a ferry to the nearby beach town of Manly as well as visiting Bondi Beach as part of the Hop on/Hop off bus ride.

Another short ferry ride took us to the zoo (those are koalas to the right!) and then to the west of downtown in Darling Harbor.

In all, it was a great week in Sydney and a super conclusion to our one month visit to Australia.

