

AN AUSTRALIAN HOLIDAY

The 2024 GA/Gam-Anon Australian National Conference is in Sydney from Friday Aug 23 to Sunday Aug 25. We are making efforts to attract as many overseas members as possible. Obviously, most will want to spend more than three days in Australia so I will lead informal, unofficial tours of i) Outback Australia ii) Sydney and surrounds and iii) the Great Barrier Reef. I am not a tour guide or travel agent but am familiar enough with these unique areas to give you a holiday to remember. This is an open invitation to all GA and Gam-Anon members (including those in Australia) and their families so please pass it on to anyone you feel may be interested. You are free to join us for as much or as little as you want.

I have included some costs in Australian dollars, US dollars and pound sterling as a guide. They are based on current prices and current exchange rates. I am looking at mid-range hotels or very slightly below. This will help lower costs so that we have a larger group. Hotels will be clean, comfortable and safe - definitely not backpackers! You are free to upgrade to a more expensive hotel if you wish.

FIRST - THE NASTIES

Spiders, sharks, snakes, crocs and the like. Danger from these is wildly exaggerated. I have lived in Sydney for over forty years and I have seen less than half a dozen snakes, none close up. Also, August is our winter and most snakes hibernate. I have never seen a dangerous spider or a shark. The only crocodiles near Sydney are in zoos. Some tours near Cairns, will hope to show you crocodiles from a bus or boat, but never close up. (No more dangerous than a zoo).

WEATHER

Late August temperatures in Sydney average 10-20 centigrade (50-68 fahrenheit), Alice Springs 8-25 (46-77) and Cairns 18-27 (64-80).

WEEK ONE (SUNDAY AUG 11 TO SUNDAY AUG 18)

Alice Springs, Uluru (previously called Ayers Rock) and inland Australia. This is by far the most expensive tour. It is likely to have the lowest numbers so I have put it furthest away from the conference.

Flights from Sydney to Alice Springs are about 1400AUD (900USD 750GBP) return. Hotel rooms in Alice Springs average 200AUD (130 USD 110GBP) per night and Uluru about 240 (160, 130).

A visit to Uluru is a must. I suggest we spend two nights, so we have a full day to explore. A trip to nearby Kata Tjuta (previously The Olgas) is strongly recommended. Kings Canyon is an option.

There are many day tours in and around Alice Springs costing about 200AUD (130USD 100GBP) for a full day, half that for a half day. There is a four hour (very) early morning balloon flight with incredible views (335AUD, 220USD 180 GBP).

The Henley-on-Todd Regatta, a major tourist event in Alice Springs, is on Saturday August 17. It is the world's only dry river regatta. Teams build their own boats and run Flintstone-style along the bed of the Todd River.

Car hire. A car is essential due to distances. My guestimate is about 500AUD (330USD, 260GBP) per person including fuel and extra mileage.

WEEK TWO (MONDAY AUG 19 TO FRI AUG 23)

Sydney and surrounds. Sydney Harbour has many activities, There is Bridgeclimb (360AUD (240 USD 200GBP)), tours of the bridge and the opera house, harbour walks, harbour cruises and ferry rides. Nearby is The Rocks where European settlement of Australia started in 1788, and Sydney city centre. There are many fabulous beaches. There are also lots of great golf courses (and many fellowship members looking to partners).

Outside of Sydney. I am considering the world heritage-listed Blue Mountains (1 hour drive) and then Jenolan Caves (a further two hours). These are tourist caves with guided walks and built paths and steps. The blurb for most caves says average mobility is required. However, the one hour Imperial Cave (258 stairs and 1070 metres (1200 yards) states '*Our easiest cave tour. Follow an ancient river bed, mostly level, with short sets of stairs. An excellent choice if you're not quite as mobile as you once were*'. Tours last about one to two hours and cost about 50AUD (33 USD, 25 GBP). If you prefer 'proper' caving, there is The Plughole tour (165 AUD, 110USD 85 GBP) lasting about 2.5 hours. The Novotel hotel room rates are valid for seven days before and after the conference.

CONFERENCE (FRIDAY AUG 23 TO SUNDAY AUG 25)

WEEK THREE (MONDAY AUG 26 TO SATURDAY AUG 31)

Tropical Cairns. Return flights from Sydney cost about 450AUD (300USD 230GBP). A hotel room for five nights is about 1200 AUD (800USD 650GBP).

There are many full-day tours available. I am considering:-

Agincourt Reef 290AUD (200USD 160GBP)

Cape Tribulation and the Daintree Rainforest 200AUD (130USD 110GBP)

Atherton Tablelands 150AUD (100USD 80GBP).

Karunda 180AUD (120USD 100GBP)

Green Island 106AUD (70USD, 60GBP)

Also available is a full day snorkeling (about 240AUD (160 USD 130GBP) and a 3.5 hour white water rafting adventure (120AUD (80USD 70GBP).

We will not need to hire cars in Cairns although some may want to if they are doing their own thing for the day.

If you want further information, wish to add something to a tour or just register your interest please contact me.

Andy D

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Estimate of main costs (combined, twin share)

As previously stated, feel free to join us for as much or as little as you want.

This is a (very) rough breakdown of the major costs, based on current prices, in Australian dollars, US dollars and British pounds for each of the three weeks.

It is based on two people twin share.

It does not include fares to and from Australia, incidentals, gifts, souvenirs etc.

WEEK ONE Sunday August 11th to Sunday 18th

(Alice Springs, Uluru and inland Australia)

	AUD	USD	GBP
Return flight	2800	1800	1500
Hotel (Alice Springs) 5 nights	1000	650	550
Hotel (Uluru) 2 nights	480	320	260
Car hire	1000	660	520
Tours 2 each?	800	520	440
Other meals	<u>800</u>	<u>560</u>	<u>460</u>
Combined estimate for two	7000AUD	4500USD	3800GBP

WEEK TWO (Monday August 19th to Sunday 25th)

(Sydney and surrounds)

	AUD	USD	GBP
Hotel (Sydney) 3 nights	600	400	320
Hotel (Blue Mtns) 1 night	100	70	60
Jenolan Caves House 1 night	380	260	200
GA conference 2 nights	1200	800	700
Other meals	<u>600</u>	<u>400</u>	<u>340</u>
Combined estimate for two	2900AUD	2000USD	1600GBP

WEEK THREE ((Monday August 26th to Saturday 31st)

(Tropical Cairns)

	AUD	USD	GBP
Return flight	450	300	230
Hotel (Cairns) 5 nights	1200	800	650
Tours 4 each?	1600	1100	880
Other meals	<u>800</u>	<u>560</u>	<u>460</u>
Combined estimate for two	4000AUD	2800USD	2200GBP

TOTAL FOR THREE WEEKS

Combined estimate for two	14000AUD	9500USD	7500GBP
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Estimate of main costs (single)

As previously stated, feel free to join us for as much or as little as you want.

This is a (very) rough breakdown of the major costs, based on current prices, in Australian dollars, US dollars and British pounds for each of the three weeks.

It does not include fares to and from Australia, incidentals, gifts, souvenirs etc.

WEEK ONE Sunday August 11th to Sunday 18th) (Alice Springs, Uluru and inland Australia)

	AUD	USD	GBP
Return flight	1400	900	750
Hotel (Alice Springs) 5 nights	1000	650	550
Hotel (Uluru) 2 nights	480	320	260
Car hire	500	330	260
Tours 2?	400	260	220
Other meals	<u>400</u>	<u>280</u>	<u>230</u>
Estimate for single	4200AUD	2800USD	2300GBP

WEEK TWO (Monday August 19th to Sunday 25th) (Sydney and surrounds)

	AUD	USD	GBP
Hotel (Sydney) 3 nights	600	400	330
Hotel (Blue Mtns) 1 night	100	70	60
Jenolan Caves House 1 night	380	260	200
GA conference 2 nights	600	400	350
Other meals	<u>300</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>170</u>
Estimate for single	2000AUD	1300USD	1100GBP

WEEK THREE ((Monday August 26th to Saturday 31st) (Tropical Cairns)

	AUD	USD	GBP
Return flight	230	150	120
Hotel (Cairns) 5 nights	1200	800	650
Tours 4?	820	550	440
Other meals	<u>400</u>	<u>300</u>	<u>460</u>
Estimate for single	2700AUD	1800USD	1700

TOTAL FOR THREE WEEKS

Estimate for single	9000AUD	6000US	5000GBP
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