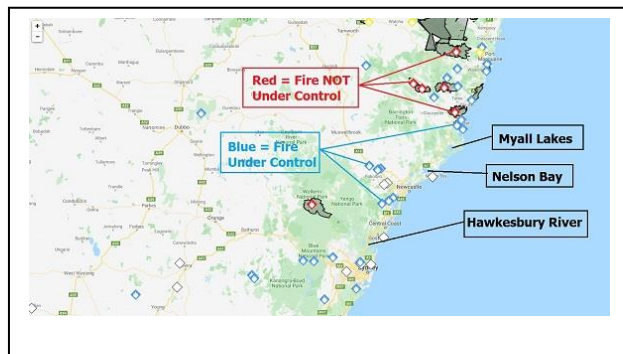




Melbourne Whittley Cruiser Club Inc.

Port Stephens Cruise Report – 17/11/19 to 23/11/2019

This was the Club's "Long Duration, interstate cruise" for 2019. It would see members tow their boats approximately 1 000 km from Victoria to Port Stephens for a week exploring a beautiful waterway and the surrounds of the Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine park. We planned to explore two waterways, putting our boats in the Myall Lakes for two nights, then taking the boats out, towing them to launch at Soldiers Point then staying in Nelson Bay Marina in Port Stephens for 4 nights.



In November 2019 major bush fires were raging in the area north, south and west of Port Stephens in the week before the start of the cruise. It was recommended by marine authorities not to go to the Myall Lakes until later in November 2019. So we stayed in Port Stephens for the 7 nights. We consulted the local Police, Fire and Marine authorities and they were advised that we were in no danger of fire in the Port Stephens area, but we would be affected by smoke, depending on the wind direction.



Port Stephens is a wonderful beach escape on a sparkling blue bay. You can relax or swim at one of the 26 beautiful sandy beaches, meet the 100 resident bottlenose dolphins, enjoy fun water sports, explore giant sand dunes, visit the small towns of Allworth, Lemon Tree and Tea Gardens, by cruising up the three major rivers that feed into the pristine inlet, that is the vast Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park, which is twice the size of Sydney Harbour.

We stayed at Nelson Bay, the largest community on Port Stephens, in the very well equipped, D'Albora Marina, with showers, toilets, a marina lounge with power and water on the floating pontoon jetties. We had walking access to shops, restaurants and supermarkets from the very clean, safe, calm marina.



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We had 11 boats and one caravan from Victoria, 2 boats and one visiting crew from New South Wales and one boat from South Australia join in the fun cruise activities for the week that we cruised and explored Port Stephens.

Crews:

Lucky Us	– Gary & Lee Honeychurch
Siennabelle	- Mario & Fil Greco
Sea Legend	- Cliff James
Sea-Ya	- Craig, Alana, Talia & Zac Wighton
Casper	- Peter & Gail Miller
To The Point	- Dean, Tracey & Bryce Worsley
Reel Nauti	- Craig, Lea & Luke Bennie
Our Time	-Russell Breguet & Deb Furtella
Groovy Ruvie	-Paul, Marielle & Josephine Van Pampus
Conkiki	-Pete & Audrey Nicolopoulos
Narvara	-Karen Phillips & Tom Tsotsus
The Caravan	-Neil Laver
Much Ado	-Ian & Judy Franklin
Edenvale	-Max & Margaret Ward
South Aussies	-Craig Carle & Lyn Dugmore
Ring ins	- Maxine & Ray Mantle

Thursday 14 November 2019 –

Crossing Bass Straight on the Spirit of Tasmania, travelling to Port Stephens – Zac Wighton

“The Chaos of Crossing over:”

Today Mum, Dad, Talia & I are going on the Spirit of Tasmania. First we went to our cabin, then we explored the ship. Talia and I played in the gaming room. It was fun. It was very rough crossing. The waves were spraying the top deck windows. It rocked me to sleep. We arrived in Melbourne at 6 am. We towed our boat 5 hours to Gundagai where we saw the dog on the tuckerbox statue. We had a history lesson.





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We kept towing our boat for 3 hours to Mossvale Caravan Park where we stayed the night in a cabin. We had a nice meal at the pub.

In the morning we drove another 4 hours to the Soldiers Point boat ramp to put the boat in the water. Dad drove the boat along the bay to Nelson Bay Marina where we met up with the MWCC to start our boating adventure.



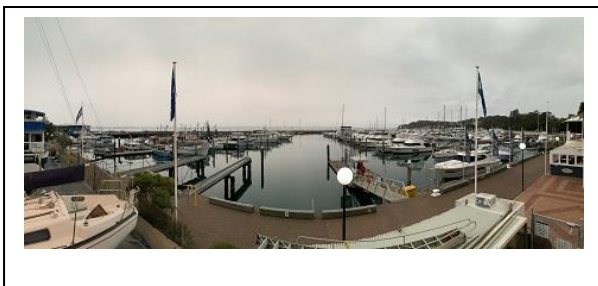
Highlights of Zac's Holiday

- Hot
- Smoke
- Fish, Pelicans, dolphins
- Swimming
- Driving the boat
- Stand up paddle board (SUP)
- Games
- Bondi Beach
- Sand dunes
- Flying home with Mum

Sunday 17 November 2019 –

Exploring Port Stephens, lunch & a swim in Salamander Bay, Dinner at the Seafood Restaurant – To the Point.

To The Point, woke to a smokey, partly overcast day and warm day. Dean, Bryce and I headed out to have look out the heads to see if it was worth having a fish. We stuck our nose out to very sloppy water conditions with the waves going every which way. We headed back into the marina to meet up with the other crews.

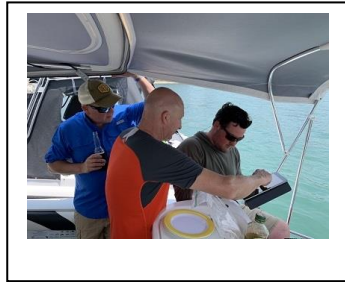




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We then headed back out the Marina tuning right and headed towards the heads (Shoal Bay) and then north across Nelson Bay to Jimmys Beach side around the sand bar back to the south side ending up at Salamander Bay where we rafted up and made some lunch.

Reel Nauti supplying the calamari and fish that they caught that morning and we cooked it up on our BBQ... It was Reel Yummy..



Luke shared his knowledge on Gary's iPad for Navionics. We jumped in for a swim after lunch enjoying the beautiful water.

We headed back to the Marina, and later, happy hour on the dock. Lee indirectly end up inviting everyone out for tea, ending up at the "The Wharf", restaurant just a short walk from the Marina. It was a fantastic meal with great company and an enjoyable night.



Monday 18 November 2019

Fishing Competition Lunch in Fame Cove – Lucky Us

Monday morning everybody was up and getting ready for the first inaugural "Cliff James" fishing competition. The challenge had been thrown out on Monday night by Cliff – "Let's see who can catch the biggest fish". There was much anticipation as six boats headed west towards Soldiers Point to try their luck, everybody thought they would be the winner. We had 90 minutes to see how many fish we could catch. The boats spread out in different directions, each sure they were in the perfect location to land that big fish. There was some chatter over the radio to see how each crew was going – not many fish being caught but everybody was having fun, enjoying the sun and trying to catch that "big one". At the end of 90 minutes we all headed over to Fame Cove to have lunch.



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It is a lovely sheltered bay where we could tie up to a public mooring buoy. Some of the water toys came out – Zac was out and about on his paddle board while Russell & Gary went for a quick dip. The rest of us relaxed and enjoyed the warm weather.

By mid-afternoon the wind was increasing so reluctantly we decided to head back to the Marina. "Lucky Us" and "Conkiki" went over to Soldiers Point boat ramp to meet "Casper" and "Groovy RuVie". It was a rough trip back to the marina as the wind had turned to the east at 30 km. Casper arrived at the marina to find their back sun awning had been blown off!!



Happy hour was again held on the jetty near "Sea-Ya" and "Conkiki".

There was catch up with the crews of Casper (Peter & Gail) and Groovy RuVie (Paul, Marielle & Josephine) who had just arrived and the presentation of awards to the winners of the "Cliff James" fishing completion.



Talia did a fantastic job and created certificates for the winners who were:

- Most fish caught – To The Point
- Biggest fish award – Lucky Us

Tuesday 19 November 2019

4 km morning Walk, Raft up and swimming in Shoal Bay – Casper - Gail

On Tuesday morning the Whittley Walkers met Alanna (out team leader for the walk) at 8.30am. We walked around the Nelson Bay walk path, up the hill to the great views over Port Stephens marine park.

There were thirteen of us, some up front striding, some in the middle, and then there was the tail end Charlies out the back.

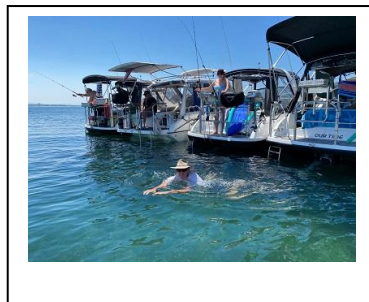


On the way back we came across "The Pottery Shed". It's totally run by volunteers and we were invited in for a tour. We were shown how the pottery is made and glazed and fired to the end result.

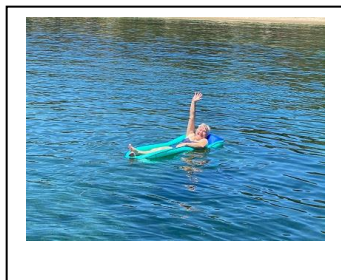


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Very interesting. Walking back to the marina after a 4 km round trip, some of us went for coffee, others back to the boats to regroup for our next part of our day.
 The weather has been great and today is a 30c day. So, we needed a swim and relaxing day.
 Seven boats headed off to Shoal Bay. A beautiful sheltered beach cove 10 min from the marina.
 We rafted up with a couple of anchors out too. It was very calm.
 See-ya, Groovy RuVie, Siennabelle together.... And Lucky Us, Our Time, Casper, Sea Legend and Conkiki together.



In we all jumped, with noodles and floats. It was a bit fresh in the water but we all enjoyed cooling off.
 Talia and Zac had their boogie boards. Deb had her noodle seat. Josephine enjoyed just swimming around to all boats. Russ swam to the beach and back.
 See-ya pumped up the Ladies Lounge and launched.....!!!! Alana, Lee and Gail enjoyed floating around with a cool wine and a great catch-up chat, and lots of sun....



The Swimming Award has to go to Josephine - never out of the water ...
 Time to pack up and head back to the Marina..... For Happy Hour on the Marina Deck and to chat about our next day adventures.



Wednesday 20 November 2019

6km Morning Walk, Cruise up the Karuah River, Lunch at Allworth – Groovy RuVie

Cruise Report 20 Nov Nelson Bay MWCC.

8:30 and, "The Whittley Walkers", are ready to take the challenge of a 6Km walk from the marina towards Sandy Point, passing Dutchies Beach.!!!! The group was quite





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large and enjoyed the scenic and healthy walk lead by Russell. It was a good start of the day.



The boating plan for the day was to explore the Karuah River with a lunch near Allworth.

The cruise up went smoothly although a bit choppy and Sea-Ya had an over temp. alarm (that cleared)

We worked our way up the river until it became too shallow to continue and found ourselves anchoring for lunch. Most boats rafted up.

Unfortunately, our boat "Groovy RuVie" didn't want to go home and needed a gentle tow from Siennabelle II before the engine started again. (Thanks Mario & Filomina) All boats made it safely back before H.H. (Happy Hour). Another great day out with the Club.

Paul & Mariëlle.



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Thursday 21 November 2019

Cruise to Tea Gardens for morning tea and cruise up the Myall River - Talia Wighton Sea-Ya

Tea Gardens and the Myall River – 21/11/19

We woke to a sunny, blue sky morning. It was a short boat ride across calm waters to Tea Gardens where we tied up at a jetty. We went for a walk along the esplanade where we saw the most interesting houseboat. It was made from old, rusty corrugated iron with lots of quirky items on it. We saw a pot belly stove as an outdoor heater, a rainwater tank on its roof and a comfy old sofa on the veranda. After we saw the houseboat, we had morning tea at the waterfront cafe.



Three boats (Sea-Ya, Sea Legend and Casper) continued to discover the Myall River and Lake system, meanwhile the other boats went back to the marina. We had to travel at a speed of 4 knots for the next 2.5 hours in shallow waters. We saw palm trees along the waters edge and a few dolphins. Sometimes it was a bit boring, so Zac and I played peg games to amuse ourselves. We stopped at an eco-resort to have a cool drink and an ice cream as it was very hot. Then we found a little peaceful cove to stay the night where we swam and enjoyed the evening.



We had boat trouble so we headed off early from the Myall River system to go to Soldiers Point Marina to meet with a mechanic. Casper and Sea Legend continued into the Myall Lake system to explore further and then they headed back to Nelson Bay Marina by the end of the day.

Written by Talia Wighton (Sea-Ya)



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Friday 22 November 2019

10km walk up Mt. Tomaree, Swim at Little Beach, Farewell Dinner at Wood Pizza – Deb Furtella - Our Time.

The morning started off with a smoke haze over the harbour and not a breath of wind. It had been a warm night and so it was a humid start for our walk to the top of Mt. Tomaree, at Shoal Bay 4km away. Our taxi van arrived at 8.45am and picked up 9 very eager "Whittley Walkers", that were waiting patiently behind the marina.



Once there, Lee and Marielle took the lead up the steep path with the rest of us following behind, Deb, Russell, Tracy, Paul, Josephine, Lyn, Gary. The view along the way was limited with the smoke, but at the top we could see Shoal Bay quite clearly. Once we reached the bottom, we all decided to continue our walk to the Shoal Bay shops for a cool drink. After much chatter and cooling down, we all decided to walk back to the harbour. In total we walked 9.7 km, in very hot conditions, but boy it was good fun.





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After lunch, 6 boats ventured off to " Little Bay " which was only 2klm away, for a much deserved swim. Since this was our last night, everybody (24) met at the " Wood Oven Pizza" which overlooked the marina.

Gary decided to make a very quick speech once we finished tea, as the weather turned nasty and people ran to their boats to close hatches etc. No sooner had we closed up and zipped up everything and the weather turned calm again another great day !

Saturday 23 to Sunday 24 –

All the boats were taken out of the water at Soldiers Point boat ramp and we all made our way home.

Thanks to all those who have written a cruise report for one of the days we spent in Port Stephens.
A very big thank you to all boat crews from Victoria, NSW & SA, for your enthusiastic, fun attitude to this Port Stephens cruise.

Gary & Lee Honeychurch - Lucky Us
Cruise Leaders – Port Stephens – Nov 2019