

QUEENSLAND 2025 WHITTLEY RALLY CRUISE REPORT

SANCTUARY COVE, 8 - 12 SEPTEMBER 2025

Ten Whittley Club Victoria (WCV) boats and crews made the journey up to Sanctuary Cove in Queensland to participate in the Queensland 2025 Whittley Rally which had been delayed from March 2025 due to the impact of Cyclone Alfred on the Gold Coast and Surrounds just before the March Rally was to commence. The Whittley Rally occurs every 2 years and rotates through the Whittley Clubs of Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet Whittley owners from different states and cruise on different waterways under the expertise of the "locals". Unfortunately, some WCV crews were unable to attend due to the date change.

The Boats and Crews who were able to attend were:

The Boss – Domenica & Renato

LeeWay – Lee-Anne & Wayne

Jay Jay – Jay & Elka

Casper – Peter & Gail

Surreel – Brad & Karen

Take 2 – Russell

Tilly – Michael

Sea Legend – Cliff

Betty Boop – Erwin & Betty

Fun Time – Gary & Lee

The road trip up to Queensland is part of the adventure. Some crews headed up early while many of us travelled together up the coast staying at various free camps and caravan parks along the way.

Surreel & Tilly had both arrived early onto the Gold Coast and were well tuned into the Queensland lifestyle by the time the rest of us arrived on Monday 8 September 2025.

FunTime left on Thursday 4 September 2025 and took a leisurely drive up to Queensland, staying at Ettamogah, Moss Vale, Kempsey & Brunswick Head. Upon arriving at Ettamogah, Betty Boop told us they blew a trailer tyre just out of Melbourne. Lucky Erwin is an expert at changing trailer tyres and it didn't disrupt their journey too much.



Monday 8 September 2025

We launched our boats at Paradise Point boat ramp which is approximately a 30 minute boat ride upstream or a 15 minute car ride from Sanctuary Cove. The Whittley Club Queensland (WCQ) had organised for a couple of their members to be on hand to assist everyone launching their boats which was very much appreciated. All Victorian boats launched safely.

Upon leaving the boat ramp, Take 2 had an alarm which was caused by a damaged impeller. The boat has just been serviced prior to leaving Victoria. FunTime had a spare impeller so Russell and Gary were able to change the damaged impeller for the spare, using the video from AquaPower Marine (which is on the WCV You Tube site).

Sanctuary Cove is a village with a large marina that has a lot of large motor yachts surrounded by golf courses and gated estates. Once we found our berths we ventured to the WCQ Rally Hub where the Qld Organising Committee had arranged for our welcome packs to be distributed from. They also had a sausage sizzle happening which was very welcome as some of us had missed lunch. Rally participants had been organised into three groups – red, blue and white. Each group would go on a different daily trip with specific trip leaders for that particular location. The organised trips were:

1. Tiplers & Jumpinpin Bar on South Stradbroke Island
2. The Boat Works on the Coomera River
3. Marine Stadium near The Broadwater

All Rally participants were safely berthed by 3:00 pm. We then all met in The Hub for a safety briefing by the Southport VMR (Volunteer Marine Rescue) in our beautiful teal rally shirts. This was followed by a welcome dinner at the Sanctuary Cove Tavern where all participants were welcomed to the Rally by the WCQ Commodore Jon Heales. To get the Rally going they had a raffle where every boat won a prize whilst dressed in a Hawaiian or loud shirt which was the theme of the night. Everyone looked great!



Tuesday 9 September 2025

FunTime was in the Blue Group so our first trip was upstream to The Boat Works on the Coomera River. Our Trip Leaders today were Jon & Kim Heales on JasKaT. This was a trip of approximately 20 minutes at 6 knots upstream. On the way we passed the Gold Coast Marina & Shipyard which is the largest in the Southern Hemisphere. The Boat Works is a huge precinct for boats of all sizes on the Coomera River where Whittley Marine have their Queensland Showroom.

We were greeted by Sharmane, The Boat Works PR Manager and Laurie Jackson, Whittley Queensland Sales Manager. We learnt a little about the huge operations of The Boat Works. It caters for small boats all the way up to the luxury super yachts. It is a very busy operation with boat maintenance, large chandlery, manufacture of luxury motor yachts, etc. It is currently owned by Tony Longhurst the former touring car champion who won Bathurst twice. He has a large display of vintage and luxury cars that we were able to wander around. All cars are in working order and regularly driven around the roads of the Gold Coast.

However, the highlight of the trip was the visit to the Whittley Showroom where we were greeted by Neville and Marianne Whittley. They had a surprise for us! We were going to have a private viewing of the new 30 foot Whittley boat that is currently being designed and built by Whittley Marine in Melbourne. Full details of this boat are yet to be revealed to the public and we were very lucky to see the current progress on this new boat. WCV members have the opportunity to hear more about this boat at the 2025 AGM on Saturday 11 October 2025 at Melbourne City Marina, Docklands. Needless to say it is a very good looking boat.

After lunch we explored a little bit further upstream in the Coomera River before heading back to Sanctuary Cove. The rest of the afternoon was spent enjoying the beautiful pool at the Intercontinental Resort attached to the Sanctuary Cove marina. We enjoyed a delicious dinner at Bistro 19 before taking on the challenge of a trivia night which was lots of fun!



Wednesday 10 September 2025

Our trip on Day 2 was to Marine Stadium located between Sea World and the Gold Coast Seaway off The Broadwater. We cruised down the Coomera River towards The Broadwater on a blue sky day with a slight breeze. Our Trip Leader today was Tony Pullen, unfortunately his wife Kim was ill and unable to join us.

We snuck under a bridge into Macintosh Island which is just behind Narrowneck on the Gold Coast. We were surrounded by high rise apartments on one side and an island full of beautiful gardens and peacocks on the other side. Unfortunately, not long after leaving Macintosh Island Jon Heales' boat had a mechanical issue so we had to leave him to be towed by Southport VMR to the Smith Street boat ramp (nearest boat ramp).

We cruised to Marine Stadium, passing by the newly constructed Superyacht marina and Sea World. Once at Marine Stadium we anchored and hopped into our tenders to get to shore. Some of us went for a walk to view the Seaway (the entrance to the Pacific Ocean from The Broadwater) looking for dolphins and turtles. Lunch was sandwiches on a picnic table while enjoying the view overlooking The Broadwater towards Main Beach, Southport and Labrador.

The art of setting your anchor can be difficult especially when the wind and tide are changing. Surreel found that their anchor was dragging so Brad had to make a quick dash in the tender to get back on the boat and re-secure the anchor. A few other boats from NSW & QLD had the same thing happen to them!

During the day we heard Betty Boop had an alarm and had to head to The Boat Works to get it fixed. They had picked up some dirt into the heat exchanger and fuel pump water cooling hoses that was causing a sensor alarm. The team at SeaTech at The Boat Works fixed the problem so they could continue on the Rally.

Dinner tonight was back at Sanctuary Cove Tavern.



Thursday 11 September 2025

Our trip on Day 3 was to Tipplers and Jumpinpin Bar on South Stradbroke Island. Our trip leaders today were Kelvin & Vicki Deasy on Lady in Red. The day was sunny but it was very windy. Our trip down the Coomera River was lumpy and it did not improve as we left the river and headed towards Jumpinpin. In fact the wind was increasing and it was decided it was unsafe to travel to Jumpinpin so we headed back to Tipplers. It was challenging setting an anchor in the strong wind and current and all boats took some time to ensure their anchor was holding. Casper was not happy with their anchor and took it up only to be blown onto shore when they had an alarm and had to stop the engine. Fortunately, there were some crews from other Blue Group boats who came to their rescue to find a rope had fallen from the boat and wrapped itself around the prop. This was cut-off and Casper was able to anchor safely and join everyone for lunch at Tipplers. The wind was not improving so after lunch we all headed back to the safety of Sanctuary Cove for the afternoon.

This was the last day of the Rally and the WCQ had planned a surprise for the Gala Dinner. The theme was a black and white night with everyone boarding "The Lady" to enjoy a yummy dinner while cruising around the canals. After final speeches and the handing over of the Rally Flag to our Victorian Commodore, Renato, the dance floor was open. What a wonderful way to end a very successful Rally.



Friday 12 September 2025

This was departure day!

FunTime and a few other boats had decided to stay for a couple of extra nights so did not need to rush to the boat ramp. Other members going to the post rally cruises to the Brisbane River and Great Keppel Island said goodbye and headed for the boat ramp. Read their cruise reports to see what they got up to on the post rally cruises.

Overall, we had a wonderful time at the Queensland 2025 Whittley Rally. We made new friends from NSW and QLD and enjoyed time spent with our fellow WCV members. WCQ did an excellent job organising this event, especially since they had to do it twice! We recommend if you can attend a future Whittley Rally you should do it. It is a very rewarding experience.

The 2027 Whittley Rally is to be organised by us – WCV so the next 2 years will be a busy time with planning & organising a rally. Your Committee will be looking for volunteers to assist with this mammoth task. Please think about if you would like to assist.

Gary & Lee Honeychurch

“FunTime”