

It is with sadness that we received notice of the cancellation of our October 21-November 4 Australia Journey to North Moreton and the Gold Coast. As coordinator of the outgoing journey, I had so looked forward to meeting Allan Roff, from North Moreton, and Janette McKeon from the Gold Coast. Both had been so welcoming in the emails that I received, that I was already energized for our upcoming trip.

Although, Covid-19 had just begun to rear its ugly head in the US, the cancelations fortunately came before any of our ambassadors had begun travel arrangements. Our local, City of Knoxville, Mayor issued an executive order on March 20, closing gyms, bars, limiting restaurant and businesses capacity. The following week, the County and State followed suit. Luckily, Eastern Tennessee, where Knoxville is located, has had a lower incidence of cases and deaths than Middle Tennessee (Nashville, the State Capitol), and West Tennessee (Memphis); any death count is a sad occurrence.

I have two house guests who arrived from Florida to shelter with me rather than return to their apartments in New York City. Having house guests is a welcome change. I no longer feel like Haley Joel Osment in "The Sixth Sense," ("I see dead people...."). Now I see real live people up close and personal, (but not too close, of course).

Tennessee is one of those states that has likely opened too soon. As of May 1, almost everything has reopened, with the exception of bars, libraries, pools and playgrounds, but these are opening again in the next week or two. Regardless of the openings, I continue to shelter in place with rare trips to the grocery or pharmacy. I've ordered grocery delivery most of the time. People here either follow the rules and wear masks or violate the recommendations.

We in Knoxville hope that all is well in your area, and that we will be able to reschedule our journey to North Moreton and the Gold Coast.

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