

Jill Worrall Tours July 2021 Newsletter

Dear Everyone

Oh, for a crystal ball....

When I began planning my Australian tours about a year ago I, along with everyone else in the travel industry, never imagined, we'd be almost back at square one again in July 2021. But here we are.

My dear, late Mum was a fan of Slim Dusty (I guess even Mums have their weak spots). But to paraphrase Slim, the current situation is like finding not one, but a whole XXXX can of redback spiders on the toilet seat.



It's been a difficult time in tourism and cutbacks are possible so here's the new Jill Worrall Tour bus and driver.

As some of you will know already, I've had to postpone my Northern Territory tour (14 of us should have been in Kakadu as I write this, exploring this region's amazing scenery, learning about its Aboriginal culture and heritage from the locals, not to mention having a swim and perhaps even an ice-cold beer).

At present we are working on rescheduling this tour, which I am sure you will appreciate is no easy task given the unknowns about when the NZ-Australia travel bubble will resume.

The pause in the travel bubble has also had a domino effect on another of my Aussie tours – Western Australia that was due to depart NZ on October 2. We're also in the process of rescheduling this tour as well.



So, just to recap, here's the current Australian tour scenario:

- 1) The Northern Territory tour (which was full!) is being rescheduled. We will update everyone on the new dates because its possible that we might have a few more rooms available next time around. So, if you're fed up with winter and getting cabin fever, do get in touch. The NT has NO local or interstate Covid cases and no community transmission of Covid. About 45 per cent of the eligible population has received its first vaccine, and 25 per cent of those eligible have been fully vaccinated.
- 2) The Western Australia tour is also being rescheduled, probably to next May. There is room for more people on this tour and we fly direct to Perth from Auckland.
- 3) The Tasmania tour, due to depart NZ on Oct 24 is still on schedule. This tour is proving very popular and at present there is no reason to change the dates, but of course we are monitoring the situation continually.
- 4) The Lord Howe, Snowy Mountains and Canberra tour due to depart Feb 18, 2022 remains in the schedule. There are currently only about two vacancies on this tour.

We will keep you all informed about rescheduled dates and other information on all these tours.

So, why have I not given up?

I must admit that almost every night between 3am and 4am I ask myself the same question. However, in short, here's why not:

- 1) I love what I do – taking tours is an integral part of my life and being able to take you away to experience our wonderful world is hugely satisfying. It's what I do and is part of what makes me ME. Being without it is awful, to be frank.
- 2) I'm tenacious – I'm not going to give up without a fight. After all, once overseas travel is safe again, I'm hoping you're going to need me again!
- 3) When I first started planning my Australian tours, no-one could predict the scale of the pandemic, and especially the impact of the Delta variant, or that things could get so badly out of control in New South Wales.
- 4) When we were all offered the chance to travel to Australia, I really wanted to make that possible for us all. And to be totally truthful, without running NZ and Australian tours while we wait for the rest of the world to open up, how could anyone keep going, financially?
- 5) Trying to keep Jill Worrall Tours up and running comes at quite an economic, emotional and mental well-being cost for not just me, but Moray and my business partner, James. But we all believe in what we're trying to do and absolutely value your support, loyalty and patience.

The phone calls, texts and emails I've received from so many of you offering your support, commiserations and hope for the future, have not only been very deeply appreciated but also underline why I want to keep going and will keep trying to run tours, even if they don't all work out the way I planned! I genuinely love travelling with you and miss all the fun we have together on tour.

This month's Feature Tour – yes there is one!



Meanwhile, as they say, I do still have one more New Zealand tour ready to roll later this year.

We're already getting good interest in my 12-day Golden Bay and Marlborough tour which begins in Nelson on November 16.

Golden Bay, especially, is a region I know very well, having been visiting it regularly, since I was in my early teens.

Taking you to places I know well that you might not be so familiar with (those travellers who came with me to the Oparara Arches or roamed in the dark on Stewart Island looking for kiwis know what I mean) is really satisfying.

But what I also love is adding in things that I've always wanted to do but have never had the opportunity to do. Bucket-list destinations if you like.

This tour has two of these - one a two-night stay at Awarao Lodge in the Abel Tasman National Park and the second is a three-night stay at Furneaux Lodge in the Marlborough Sounds.

These are truly iconic places to stay, for me doubly so because unless you are on foot, the only way for regular travellers to reach them is by water. This doesn't involve ocean-going conditions but incredibly scenic short cruises.

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Awaroa Lodge is set in native forest complete with wetland areas and is just a short walk from one of the Abel Tasman National Park's many glorious golden sand beaches. If you contributed to the successful 2018 campaign to buy a stretch of the Awaroa Beach you might be able to stand on your own piece of coastal real estate!



The lodge is well known for its excellent food (we have an included dinner here) served either in its restaurant or its outdoor pizzeria that is set in a forest glade. We have a full day here to relax, stroll on the beach or enjoy an early summer swim, or you can join a guided walk or kayaking trip.

Furieux Lodge is situated at the head of Endeavour Inlet in Queen Charlotte Sound. The centrepiece here is the former Howden homestead, which is over 100 years old and now houses the lodge's excellent restaurant. Lawns slope down to the beach and close by is 2000 acres of pristine and highly protected native forest.



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We have three nights based here and I do have plans for you here, although of course you can just chill out and enjoy your surroundings. Included in the tour is a half-day tour to Ship Cove, one of James Cook's favourite anchorages. and to a nearby island bird sanctuary. Again, more places I've longed to visit!

There's another full day to do whatever you like but what I'm planning to do is take the three-to-four hour walk to Furneaux's sister resort at Punga Cove for lunch. The plan is to enjoy a leisurely waterside lunch and then take the water taxi back home. It should also be possible for tour members to take the water taxi to Punga Cove.

I'm looking forward to it all!

Out and about

My visits to Nelson and Wellington were thoroughly enjoyable. Derek and I caught up with nearly 30 Jill Worrall Tour travellers. Over some excellent food, we reminisced about favourite trips, commiserated about the ones we've missed out over the last two years, and I was so delighted to hear, looked forward to trips to come.



Plenty of smiles as we met up in Nelson for dinner.

I asked everybody where they were most looking forward to travelling with me once 'we're allowed out'. Along with tours I'm hoping to revive at some point (including the Greek Islands, South India, Ethiopia and the Pamir Highway) people nominated the Caucasus; Poland and the Baltic States; Scandinavia, including Iceland and the Faroes; Ecuador and Galapagos; a repeat of my Adriatic chartered small ship cruise; Egypt and Jordan and walking in Ireland.

On the home front

My big news is that some time in February next year Rachel and Atkins are expecting their second child – a little brother or sister for Natey. Derek and I are so delighted for them. Everything's going very well and I'm about to launch into my second heirloom crochet shawl project. I'll be able to crochet while muttering darkly about troublesome Sydneysiders....

Meanwhile, out in the garden, the playhouse is finished. Derek who's about six-foot spent many hours crouched inside it painting the interior after he'd finished the exterior. I was 'allowed' to paint some of the veranda railings under close supervision. Now our only issue is that Natey doesn't want to leave it. Derek had to carry him inside, literally kicking and screaming, on his last visit.



Please do stay in touch, even if you have no plans to go anywhere at present!

Very best wishes
Jill