

Podcast 73 - Brisbane - The River City

by Rob McCormack - Wednesday, March 09, 2016

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Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 73 – Brisbane – The River City

<http://traffic.libsyn.com/slowenglish/podcast73.mp3>

Hi,

The state of Queensland lies in the north eastern part of Australia and its capital is Brisbane. Queensland has a reputation with most Australians as being a great holiday destination with excellent weather. Beautiful one day, perfect the next – that's the slogan of the Queensland Tourist Bureau. There's no doubt that the weather is often superb in Queensland. However it can also be quite varied, as it seems to me that storms and heavy rain are a little more common there than in Melbourne where I live. The northern part of Queensland can also experience cyclones from time to time during the cyclone season. But on balance, I would say these are not very frequent and are not major problems as far as Queenslanders are concerned. They love their state and they love Brisbane, their capital. In this podcast, I would like to tell you a little about Brisbane, one of my favourite cities in Australia to visit.

Brisbane has a population of around 2.3 million, so it's quite a large city, being the third biggest city in Australia behind Sydney and Melbourne. It is the gateway to many fantastic Queensland tourist attractions such as the Sunshine Coast which is 100km north of Brisbane and the Gold Coast which is around 80 km south of Brisbane. When our children were small, my wife and I took them to the Gold Coast to visit the fantastic theme parks which are located there. That was quite an experience and very memorable. We went to Movie World and Sea World, if I remember correctly. I can recommend them if you have any young children.

Brisbane is about 900 kilometres north of Sydney. The Brisbane River flows right through the city, with the city centre being about 15 kms from the river mouth in Moreton Bay. In my opinion, the river is the major feature which makes Brisbane such a beautiful place to visit.



Brisbane's skyline, as seen from Kangaroo Point.

By Lachlan Fearnley (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons
The Brisbane River, and Brisbane itself, were named after Sir Thomas Brisbane, the Governor of New South Wales from 1821 to 1825. Brisbane was first established as a penal colony in 1824, just like Sydney had been in 1788. Free settlers first came to Brisbane in 1842 and Brisbane was made the capital of the new colony of Queensland when it was created in 1859. In more recent times, Brisbane was the venue for the G20 Leaders Summit in November 2014.

People from other parts of Australia love to go on holidays in Brisbane. For example, in the year ending September 2015, there were around 1.4 million Australians who visited Brisbane on holiday, with another half a million holiday visitors coming from overseas. I was lucky enough to spend 4 days holidaying in Brisbane in late 2011. My wife attended an educational conference there as part of her work and I came along just for fun. During the day I was able to explore many of the great attractions which Brisbane has to offer.

The thing I found most impressive was the Brisbane River and the interesting river walks you can do on both sides of the river. The river has wide walking paths on each side and it is possible to cross over the river fairly easily on one of the many bridges which cross the river throughout the city. In particular, I enjoyed walking on the river bank opposite the main central business district, with its office skyscrapers and tall apartment buildings built right up close to the water's edge just across the river. The river is always busy with ferry traffic which you can easily catch for a ride further up or down the river. I recommend the FerryCat for a fast ride up river to check out other city attractions.



My wife and I also walked along this part of the river in the cool of the evening and the lights of the skyscrapers across the water were magnificent. It was like a gigantic light show against the night sky.

Also near the city centre is the iconic Story Bridge. This bridge was designed by Dr John Bradfield who also designed the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Story Bridge is 1072 metres long and at night it is lit up with hundreds of bright lights which reflect off the water in a wonderful display of colour. It is not as big as the Sydney Harbour Bridge, but I was nonetheless very impressed with how it made the cityscape really sparkle.



View of Brisbane and Story Bridge.

By Lachlan Fearnley (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons
During the day, my favourite area was the Southbank Parklands. This too is on the opposite river bank to the main city centre and consists of beautiful gardens, a man made beach, shops and restaurants, an amphitheater for concerts, a 60 metre high ferris wheel and outstanding walkways through the green parklands. I spent several hours there and really enjoyed it.

A rather unexpected sight right opposite the City Botanic Gardens was the Kangaroo Point Cliffs. These stone cliffs are close to the edge of the river and are about 18 metres high. They are used regularly by climbers and abseilers. On the day that we walked along their base, we could see people of all ages trying their hand at rock climbing. It's also a great place to have a picnic.

The city also has many great museums and fine city architecture, including the Queensland Gallery of Modern Art and the Town Hall building. These are always worth a visit.

My best memory of Brisbane however is from our evening walk along the river. The lights were amazing and the weather was cool and refreshing. We crossed over one of the bridges and walked along the river bank marveling at the city buildings and lights on the other side. We came across the Brisbane Jazz Club and decided to go in. What a treat! Andrea Lisa and her excellent band were playing.

<https://youtu.be/fMGn9Qz49pk>

That was a great way to finish our visit to Brisbane, the river capital of sunny Queensland.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 60]

Vocabulary

abseilers = people who climb down a cliff quickly using a rope
amphitheater = a place outdoors where people can watch a concert
apartment = a place to live which is part of a large building with many such
architecture = buildings
attended = went to
attractions = things which are exciting to visit
bridges = a way to get across a river
capital = the main one
central business district = the centre of a city. Often shortened to CBD
cityscape = the view across the city
concerned = from the viewpoint of a person
consists = made up of
created = started, made
cyclone = a very, very strong storm. Also called a hurricane
destination = the place you are going to
display = something to look at
edge = a line showing where an area finishes
educational conference = a meeting of people to discuss things about education.
established = started
excellent = very, very good
fantastic = very, very good
feature = a characteristic
ferry traffic = many boats which carry many people down a canal or river
frequent = happens often
gateway = a place from which you can go to other places
gigantic = very large
iconic = when something is much loved and respected
impressive = when you think something is very good
Jazz = a type of music
located = found
magnificent = when something is very, very good to look at
marveling = when you look at something and think it is very good

nonetheless = when you ignore all the bad points

on balance = when you consider the good and bad points together

outstanding = very, very good

penal colony = an area owned by a foreign country which is used as a jail

reflect = when light bounces off glass or water

refreshing = makes you feel refreshed

skyscrapers = very tall buildings in a city which have many, many floors

slogan = a few words which describe a key message

sparkle = when something shines in the sun

superb = very, very good, almost perfect

theme = a topic

throughout = in all parts of a place

Tourist Bureau = the place which organizes holidays

treat = when something is very enjoyable

unexpected = you did not expect to see something

varied = when something is changeable