

Podcast 73 – Brisbane – The River City

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

Podcast Number 73 – Brisbane – The River City

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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.

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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 it's 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.

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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.

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

Podcast 73 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

Start quiz

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