

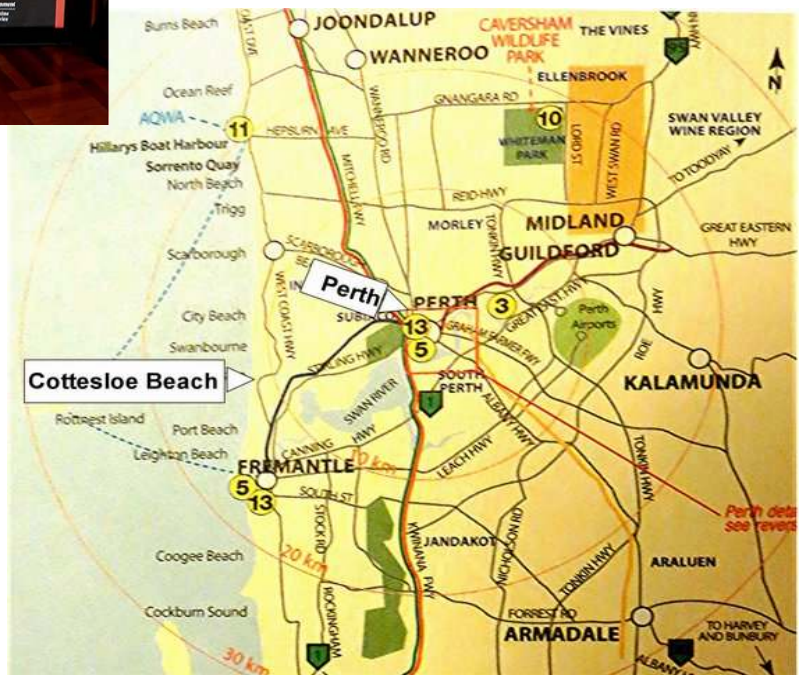
**2/26/13 - Day 51 –Perth and Fremantle, Australia:** The Amsterdam remained overnight in the harbor at Fremantle. For our second day in the Perth-Fremantle area we had signed up for a tour of Perth organized by Cruise Specialists. About 8am we met in the Ocean Bar with Lucia and Henk Barnhoorn, our Cruise Specialists ambassadors. Here is a picture on the right showing some of our companions on the tour today. Our busy ambassadors checked everyone in and sent us on our way to Bus C along with 27 fellow passengers. On the way through the passenger terminal we were



greeted by the familiar signs, as shown on the left, warning us about the quarantine that Australia enforces. So far we haven't heard of anyone getting in trouble with the Quarantine Police. We boarded our bus in front of the passenger terminal and were pleased to see that it was only half full so there was a great selection of seats.

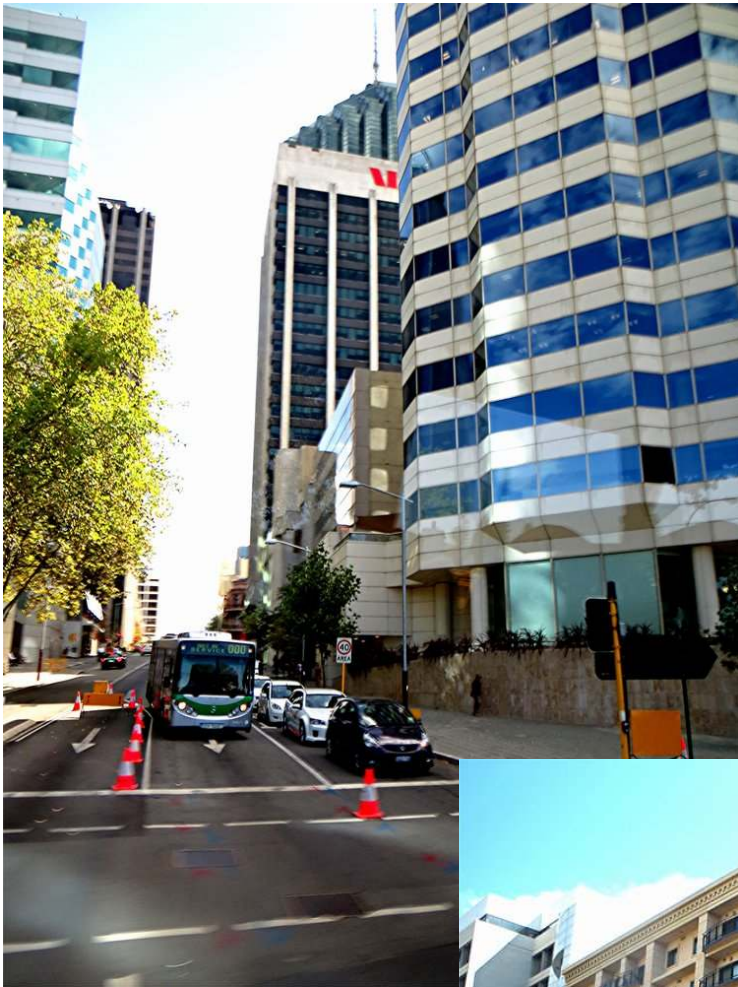
We were looking forward to the guided bus tour of downtown Perth, King's Park, and Perth suburbs leading out to a swimming beach in the village of Cottesloe and then a drive-around tour

of Fremantle at the end. The map on the left shows the location of our tour highlights. There are faint red circles on the map showing distance from Perth. The distance from Fremantle to Perth is 15km which is about 9 miles. The map also shows the popular Caversham Wildlife Park, which was not part of our tour, about 12 miles further north of Perth.





The ride to Perth was not very long and as we approached the city there was a nice view of the skyline across the Swan River, as shown on the right.



We were soon driving through the canyons between the high rise business and apartment buildings. Yesterday we saw these tall buildings from the sea as we approached Fremantle on the Amsterdam. There was one apartment building, as shown below, where our guide Carlo had personal experience. He said that 10 years ago he could have purchased a one bedroom apartment for \$250,000. Now with the ongoing real estate boom the same apartment is selling for \$500,000.





Another point made by Carlo was that there is an ongoing conflict between developers in Perth who want to tear down old structures and replace them with high rise buildings.



Usually the old building is removed but in a few cases the people who want to retain the heritage of the old architecture win the battle. The picture on the left shows one case where the old structure stayed in place while the glass, steel and concrete new buildings sprung up around it.

This looks like a case of winning the battle but losing the war.

Although the old architecture of the city was beautiful, the section of Perth dominated by high rise buildings has a clean vibrant look that they can be proud of. We were to get some more views of the skyline later from Kings Park.

As our bus wheeled around one corner we were surprised to see, Bernard and Irma, our Amsterdam next door neighbors, as shown on

the right. They were seeing the sights and doing the tourist routine in Perth today. We had chatted earlier about their plans to take the train from Fremantle to Perth (\$4 per person one way) and apparently their plans were working out quite well.





We passed by the Swan Bell Tower that contains some historic bells given to Perth by Britain. We got a picture of the Swan Bell Tower that has a striking modernistic appearance, as shown on the right. Like many bold and different building designs this one stirred up some political controversy. Our bus driver, Bob, related the story about a government official who pushed the project through to completion against strong opposition. He was the object of criticism in the newspapers and generally around town. His name was Richard which frequently takes on the nickname "Dick". Bob said that after the tower was completed some wags in the city referred to it as "Dicky's Erection". Whatever – we thought it had some eye catching appeal and time will tell if it will become an iconic symbol of Perth.



Our bus wound its way through city streets and eventually we arrived at the visitor's center of King's Park. King's Park sits on a hill overlooking Perth and it provides wonderful views of the city. Most of the landscaping is in native plants so that, except for the central lawns and buildings, it resembles the way the land looked before Europeans came to Australia.



There are many memorials around the park. We took a picture of the main memorial, shown on the right, which was dedicated to Australian soldiers who lost their lives in the First World War.

We walked around the grounds and enjoyed the view of Perth from the vantage point of the hill we were on. On the right is the collection of high rise buildings that make up the main downtown section of Perth. Below is a picture of the city along the Swan River shoreline.



Yesterday while in

Fremantle, we were annoyed by a cawing sound that came from many of the trees and building rooftops. We assumed it was some sort of bird making the noise but couldn't pin down the culprit. Today in King's Park we saw a black bird making that cawing sound. It was looking for an opportunity to snatch some food at an outdoor restaurant, as shown in the photo on the right. It had an air sack in its throat that puffed out as shown in the picture. As it made the cawing sound the air sack would deflate. We have similar crow-like birds in the US but we were glad it wasn't in our neighborhood.







We finished our visit at King's Park as tour guide, Carlo and Cruise Specialist Ambassador, Tom Mullen, kindly guided us back to the right bus, as shown on the left.

Our bus then wound its way through several neighborhoods to give us some notion of how the residential area looked. The following pictures

show a selection of homes that we photographed today.







Admittedly these homes were in a prosperous looking part of Perth so probably don't represent the average. However, we never did see any areas that appeared to be in an economically depressed state.

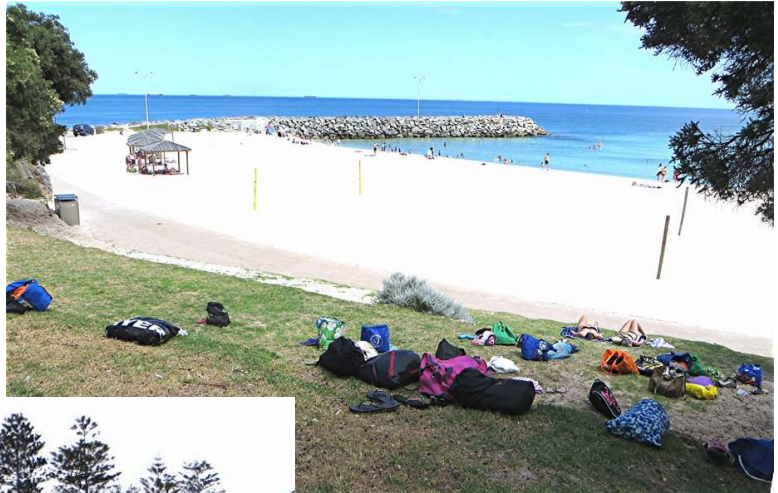
We drove by a filling station so it was possible to get a photo of the posted gas prices, as shown on the left. Unleaded regular gas was selling for \$1.479 AU or \$1.56 USD per liter. Assuming there are 4 liters per gallon that works out to \$6.24 USD per gallon. This gas station had an arrangement with the Coles stores to give an 8 cent discount if you made a large enough purchase at a Coles store. Similar discount programs are available in some US cities.

On the subject of energy sources, Carlo said that electricity in Australia used to be generated primarily by burning oil. Oil became very expensive but fortunately a large source of natural gas was developed in the north part of Australia. Now most electricity in Australia is generated by burning natural gas. A couple days later while cruising off the western coast of Australia, near Carnarvon, we spotted this deep see drilling rig that is probably part of the Australia production field.



Going back now to today's tour, we drove to an ocean beach park in the town of Cottesloe where we got out and walked around to see hundreds of people enjoying a wonderful day at the beach. Below are some of the photos we got of this spot that reminded us of the uncrowded La Jolla, California beaches in the 1960s.

Note the personal belongings left on the lawn by the swimmers with little concern about theft.



Lifeguards, as shown below, were keeping watch over the swimmers at the beach





At an adjacent beach, surf board riders using long paddles for propulsion were waiting for some waves on this beautiful day of unusually calm surf.



The cranes in the Fremantle Harbor can be seen in the distance.



This “Doggy Dumpage Disposal Unit” we saw at the beach brought a smile to our faces. We have similar plastic bags for pet poop back home but couldn’t remember what they are called.



We left the town of Cottesloe and headed for Fremantle a short distance away.



We were nearing the end of today's tour but before getting off the bus we were treated to a drive around Fremantle while Carlo continued to describe the passing scene. Unlike Perth, Fremantle political and civic organizations have been successful in preserving most of the old buildings dating back to the mid 1800s.

Shown on the right is the rather menacing wall of the prison that held criminals brought to Australia from England. The jail is now a tourist attraction and the entrance is shown below.



We next drove by the beautiful Esplanade Fremantle Hotel. Back in the 1980s the Fremantle Yacht Club sponsored the America's Cup race here in Fremantle. A huge number of Australian and foreign visitors flooded Fremantle for the event. It was a fortunate

circumstance for the old Esplanade Fremantle Hotel which had been scheduled for demolition. Instead they restored the hotel to its former glory in time to serve the visitors coming to Fremantle for the America's Cup Yacht races. The photo below shows the hotel as it stands today.





Our tour continued as we passed the old market buildings of Fremantle, shown on the right. The soft, low profile features of the old buildings in Fremantle made a sharp contrast with the clean polished glass, steel and concrete skyscrapers of downtown Perth.



At this time Carlo gave us the option of getting off the bus in downtown Fremantle and walking back to the Amsterdam or continuing on to the ship by bus. We decided to get off here and have our last fling at soaking up the sights of Australia before the Amsterdam carried us away later this afternoon. In a nearby park some school children were having an outing. They wear blue uniforms with broad brimmed hats that are required in Australian schools. The hats protect the children from ultra violet radiation getting through the atmospheric hole in the ozone layer that hovers in the southern hemisphere near Australia.





While walking along the sidewalk we came across more evidence of Fremantle's dedication to preserving the old sights. The sidewalk shown on the right had been diverted sharply around this beautiful old tree in order to give it a few more years to shade this neighborhood.



Before returning to the Amsterdam we had one more errand to complete. We wanted to stop by the Coles supermarket



and pick up some of the wonderful Australian snack bars called Tim Tam. We soon found the local Coles supermarket that we had visited yesterday.

We made our purchase of Tim Tams that are shown in the photo below. We were introduced to this Australian treat by Bruce, the Amsterdam Cruise Director, and if a steady supply were

possible we might become addicted. If Twinkies are ever taken off the US junk food market we think Tim Tams may take their place.

After this last little shopping spree we returned to the Amsterdam. The ship got underway about 4:30pm and we got underway for our next port of call in Bali, Indonesia. This visit to five Australian cities has been a real pleasure.



Outside of the USA Australia is our favorite country.