

Hello fellow Endeavour Hills Probians,

We ended up the year with a great ferry crossing and day in Queenscliff, a change, TWO Christmas parties and Christmas lights viewing.

WEDNESDAY 19TH NOVEMBER. QUEENSCLIFF OUTING.

The council bus sitting 12 people was full and packed cars followed us.

It's a shame the council does not have a bigger bus as the outings are very popular and it would be better to travel together and not be spread out.

Alternatives:

can't we hire 2 council buses or a big commercial bus?

As I am a bus fanatic, I put my hand up for a seat and pay straight away or as soon as possible when an outing is announced. I like to sit up, see the world from a higher perspective, not to have to worry about driving and be able to focus on the views.

The drive to Sorrento is straight down the freeway and it takes just over one hour. Sitting down comfortably leads people to communicate with their neighbours (but don't talk loudly or people surrounding you will hear everything you meant as a private conversation).

The first time I made the crossing it was in a boat. The boat has grown into a catamaran (3 of them in fact) to cope with the traffic: 3 twin hull (catamarans) vessels, MV (motor vessel) Sorrento, MV Queenscliff and the small MV Princess used only in peak periods. Each of the two main ferries can hold 80 cars and 700 passengers.

I spent the whole crossing on the upper deck

The brick semicircle in the sea that can be seen not long after leaving Sorrento (6 km north-east from Sorrento), South Channel Island or South Channel Fort, is what's left of an artificial island built in the 1880's as part of defensive works to protect the entrance to Port Phillip Bay. Queenscliff was then known as Fort Queenscliff.

Looking back to Sorrento you can see The Millionaire Walk where rich people have their holiday houses with enormous gardens, private tracks leading down to the sea and private jetties leading to their boats. I've done the walk twice and pondered about money, etc.

Approaching Queenscliff I was surprised by the modern ferry Terminal.

An award winning architectural design, The Architectural Masterprize, designed by F2 Architects, opened in April 2023, and includes a cafe, a passenger lounge, a retail store, events space and a restaurant. At the cost of 10 million dollars.

At the entrance there is an immersive 'Under the Bay Experience' showing the marine life living in Port Phillip Bay.

There was nothing there a few years ago, I and other people observed. The only thing I recognised were the two pylons at the sides of the harbour's entrance that protected the boat from bumping against the rocky entrance and be damaged. I know what those pylons are because the first time I made the crossing I asked the captain about them as I was intrigued by their position and the fact that they are padded. The sea is not always calm, it can be choppy, wild and destructive. So what a clever idea to have two padded pylons to

protect ferries. I don't think the catamarans need them. Our catamaran was very steady and entered the harbour directly and smoothly.

As soon as we disembarked we headed to the restaurant booked for lunch. It was posh and expensive and most of us didn't like the menu. So we departed en masse (luckily Chris didn't have to pay for the cancellation) and went exploring the wharf lined with cafes, shops, etc. Again a new development as there was nothing there at my last crossing. We ended up spreading around and having lunch in different places. Fish and Chips, cafes, little restaurants had their fair share of our business. And we all seemed to be quite content with our meals.

After lunch we reassembled and walked to the town, admiring along the way, the pretty fishermen's cottages with their lovely coastal gardens.

Walking up the main street some of us stopped at the op shop (we have some addicts) and some continued up for a quick exploration of the town. There are two Vintage Shops on the right side and an Antique one across the street. There wasn't time to go for a quick look so we started walking down to the wharf to board the ferry and we did it leisurely looking at the old buildings

At the terminal we had a good look in the gift shop, some bought presents and, after a short rest and drink of water, we started boarding the ferry.

Going back home after a short but pleasant look at a coastal town way of life.

The Sorrento arrival wasn't as smooth as at Queenscliff, the captain having several attempts to dock. Of course that raised the observation that - as in any jobs - there are hazards and good and not so good workers.

At Sorrento we had to wait to let the cars drive out before disembarking and we were surprised that there were so many during the week.

The drive back home was a noisy one as the music had been turned up to the max. It was quite unpleasant and spoilt the meditative mood we were in.

And we didn't have any LOLLIES to munch on! What happened? We have always plenty of sweets to go around on these bus trips.

Finally safe back at the Endeavour Hills Shopping Centre car park some of us rushed in to buy food essentials. Back to everyday reality.

CHANGE.

THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER.

We have been having Trivia Night at The Dandenong Club lately instead of The Mulgrave Country Club as it's nearer and people don't have to travel far at night ...and on the last game night we were rewarded by winning THIRD PRIZE! (Great result considering we have been on a losing streak for a long while).

Great hopes for the future. We are going to be champions.

We had two Christmas parties:

MONDAY 8TH DECEMBER. PINE GROVE HOTEL.

The big party (over 30 people) was at The Pine Grove Hotel that has become our favourite venue.

The tables were beautifully decorated by Helen and Nola entertained us on her keyboard.

The food was (as always) good and the people who chose a lighter meal lavishly praised the pumpkin soup that was thick, tasty and hot.

The pudding was generously sprinkled with brandy.

WEDNESDAY 17TH DECEMBER. DANDENONG CLUB CHRISTMAS PARTY.

The second party was at The Dandenong Club and it was a combination of Morning Melodies (+ scones) and lunch.

Marty Rose, Brendan Scott and Rick Evans were entertaining and full of jokes. They were quite fabulous when they relaxed, stopped worrying about entertaining the audience and started performing for themselves, responding to each other's music and words. As soon as they started enjoying themselves the audience was captivated. They play keyboard, piano, electric guitar, sax, etc.

THURSDAY 18TH DECEMBER.

As last year we were invited to see David's son house illuminated by computer with Christmas decorations.

At 8.45 pm we were sitting down enjoying a cool drink (champagne mostly) and listening to David's son explaining the way he was working on the computer to illuminate the decorations.

I'm fascinated by the 3D creations - specifically the flowers in the front garden. I'd love to see the whole process.

After the info talk we went out to admire the illuminated house. So gorgeous.

Once again I was indulged and Bluey, Bingo and the whole doggy family were projected (?) on the garage door to my and the neighbourhood children's delight who also loved the soap baubles and the snow produced by machines.

The music was great too and could be chosen by scanning.

Neighbours - of a few nationalities - came around and cars stopped in the middle of the street to have a good look.

Hopefully this event will become a Probus tradition.

Photos from the Christmas lights session at Robert Trotter's place



Vanna Walsh