

## DARWIN AUSTRALIA

We arrive in Darwin, Australia's most northerly port at 9 am. The weather is cloudy and humid and we disembark with our fellow lecturers Tony and Sheila, deciding to spend time exploring the city rather than taking a tour. Other passengers have booked tours to see the salt water crocodiles in the Katherine Gorge, or to take a city tour of Darwin itself.



There is a courtesy bus from the port to the centre of Darwin, and when we arrive 5 minutes later we can see what a beautiful part of the world this is. There are wide, shaded streets with lots of seating areas, many air-conditioned shopping malls, and a lovely friendly atmosphere. We all spend some time buying souvenirs, essential supplies, and of course, a welcome cup of coffee!

The temperature climbs steadily throughout the day, and when it becomes too oppressive we dive into an open air bar for a meal and a cooling pint of Aussie beer. The bar serves all manner of "Bush Tucker" including Kangaroo, Emu, and Wichita grubs, although Owain plays safe and orders a 200 gram burger, and Alvina, a Thai green chicken salad.

There is a large tree in the centre of the outside seating area and we suddenly notice a Possum, sleepy and obviously just waking up for the evening. He poses on the trunk of the tree as many people photograph him and feed him with vegetables and fruit.



We are about to leave the bar when there is a sudden downpour. The tropical rain lasts for 30 minutes, so we stay in the bar for a while longer! By this time the day is drawing to a close, and we take a short detour to see a local beach, and then board the shuttle bus bound for the Van Gogh. This is certainly a place we would like to return to.

A pilot has come aboard our ship, and he will be responsible for guiding the Van Gogh through the straits towards the north of Queensland, and the channel through the Great Barrier Reef. The weather suddenly gets stormy as we sail around a cyclone, and many passengers take to their cabins.

Today it is our last Computer Club meeting, and a number of passengers have decided to hold a farewell party for us the next day. Many of them say that they have asked at the reception desk for computer tuition to be continued for the rest of the cruise. We feel privileged to have taught and known these passengers so well.

About 30 people arrive for this farewell gathering, we are not allowed to buy a drink at all, and it is almost 2 am when we finally retire to bed.

