



South Bands to Australia

Down Under Update 11-9-2010



Greetings from Team Australia! Excitement is beginning to build as we begin the final stages of planning and organizing our trip to Australia! Thank you to all of the parents, students and supporters that have helped make this far-off dream a reality!

We are now at the point where we have specific information regarding plans, schedules, accommodations, air and visa information and what you should expect as the timeline quickly accelerates up to the moment to take off. In order to bring everyone up to date, please read over the enclosed material carefully.

Itinerary: The detailed itinerary is still being assembled. It is based on the best possible travel scenarios relative to flight/arrival/return times, local Australian Holidays, Australian High School schedules and our performance opportunities. After we fill in our exact performance schedule we will pencil in a plan for every minute of the trip from beginning to end. We will pack as much activity into each day as we can possibly accomplish. General information that can be shared at this time is subject to change.

Depart Waukesha Thursday, April 21st sometime between 10:00am - 1:00pm by bus for O'Hare International Airport. Current airline arrangements call for 2 groups to depart on 2 separate American Airline flights of 75 and 25 travelers to go through Los Angeles or San Francisco. This plan is very tentative at this point and plans are still being negotiated along with rates, instruments, weights, baggage and passengers. Flights times average 15-1/2 hours once we depart the West Coast. After skipping ahead one day across the International Date Line we arrive on Saturday April 23rd in Brisbane or Sydney. (TBA) Clear customs, board Qantas Airlines and depart for Cairns. We should all arrive in Cairns between 12:30 and 1:45 local time. Return flights will leave Sidney on Saturday April 30th. We will arrive home the same day we leave Sydney only a day later??? This will give us a day at home to recover before returning to school and work. Those who are planning to add-on a side trip to New Zealand will depart to Auckland rather than the States.

Preparations: Preparations are ongoing at many different levels. Students will be developing understandings and familiarization with Australian history, culture and everyday life. We will be connecting with Australian High School Band Directors and initiating an email exchange with students at Engadine High School <http://www.ehs.nsw.edu.au/> in preparation for a school visit and possible joint performance.

We are scheduling extra rehearsals for the Aussie band beginning 2nd semester. They will be held beginning at 6:30 am every Wednesday morning. Band and Jazz band members will also have extra evening and weekend rehearsals scheduled in February and March. We will rehearse only as much as we need to but each participant must make sure they can play every part easily. There will be **no compromise** on this point.

Hotels: We will be staying in very nice resorts/hotels. In Cairns we will be staying at the Colonial Club Resort. Information can be found at: <http://www.cairnscolonialclub.com.au/>
In Sidney we will be staying at the Park Royal Darling Harbour. <http://parkroyalhotels.com>
This is our original hotel but the name has been changed due to new ownership.

Deadlines: Please observe all payment deadlines. We are writing some very large checks!
Exact pricing is currently on target but is still in flux due to a large number of variables yet to be settled.

Passports: Everyone should by now have your passports in hand. We need an enlarged copy of all travelers' passports copied with absolute legibility. This document will secure our group visa and will travel with us on the trip. You may deposit your passport copy in the safe at anytime beginning now through December 10.

Participant Meetings: Current planning calls for a series of four informational meetings to be held in January through April to help educate participants and to maximize the quality of the overall travel experience for our travelers. At these meetings you will receive informational packets on Australian history, culture, geography, customs, weather, money, phone use, updated itineraries, travel procedures and much more. A final meeting will be held during the first week of April at which time all business details and final instructions will be addressed.

New Zealand: A number of people have expressed interest in an extension tour to New Zealand. There will be two basic packages. #1 is "air only" from Sydney to Auckland to return to the US on May 4th. All additional costs and arrangements will be at the traveler's discretion. Air alone packages will run in the neighborhood of \$500.00 or less. A more comprehensive but basic package has been put together that includes air to Auckland, a hotel, and activities to Rotoroua, returning to the states on May 4th as well. Prices for the "full package" add-on will be in the \$900.00-\$1200.00 range depending on a number of variables. There will be an additional \$100.00 deposit due when we are ready to book the options. Please email Claudia Barron @ redriderfx@att.net if you are interested in participating in the New Zealand add-on by Nov. 22nd.

Scuba: Certified scuba divers will have the option of purchasing a 2 tank dive during the Catamaran reef excursion to the Lower Isles of Port Douglas. I will be involved in negotiating the details of the trip in order to meet the needs of our group as best as possible. We need a commitment from all certified divers who plan to participate as the number of divers we have is crucial in setting up the dive with local operators. Please email me @ gkammere@waukesha.k12.wi.us as soon as possible if you plan to dive.

Trip Shirts: All participants will be required to purchase one trip shirt to wear for performances and other venues as needed. The shirt price will be included in the final adjusted trip cost. Each shirt will be available in both long and short sleeve versions and will be a commemorative souvenir of this great expedition "down under." Cost is yet to be determined and extra shirts will be available to order.

