



Trip Report

THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

BY RYAN RAPOZA

Trip Itinerary (Oct 11-Nov 6)

- ◆ Countries and Cities

- ◆ Australia

- ◆ Sydney

- ◆ Cairns

- ◆ Melbourne

- ◆ New Zealand

- ◆ Queenstown

- ◆ Auckland

- ◆ Fiji

- ◆ Coral Coast

Australia (Sydney)

- ◆ Sites of note
 - ◆ Sydney observatory – time keeping, ball drop, old equipment, photo contest and observing tour on .8 meter telescope (sun spots) with planetarium show. <https://maas.museum/sydney-observatory/>. Night tours are available.
- ◆ Conditions – Cloudy skies with lots of light pollution, rural areas not far away and lots of greenery in the city
- ◆ Thoughts – Favorite city in Australia, lots to do but I'd live out in the suburbs. I was unable to get any photos due to weather and light pollution

Australia (Cairns pronounced Cans)

- ◆ Sites of note
 - ◆ Great Barrier Reef
- ◆ Conditions – Cloudy skies, humid, with lots of light pollution, rural areas not far away and lots of greenery in the city. Walked the city one night looking for a dark park but was not able to find one.
- ◆ Thoughts – If the skies were clear you may be able to get some good viewing. Is located north east side of Australia

Australia (Melbourne)

- ◆ Sites of note
 - ◆ Great Ocean Road – Very scenic and would be a dark location to see the sky at night. It is on the ocean so salt deposits on equipment would be a problem.
 - ◆ Observatory in botanical gardens – Closed to public was not able to see
 - ◆ Local Astronomy Club – Runs private tours of the Observatory and has star parties as well.
<https://www.rbg.vic.gov.au/visit-melbourne/attractions/melbourne-observatory>
 - ◆ Penguin Parade – dark conditions away from the city and hotels near could be a place to stay for darker skies
- ◆ Conditions – Raining weather, cold, with lots of light pollution in the city, very rural African savanna only 20 miles out the city.
- ◆ Thoughts – Light pollution is very bad due to large skyline include the largest building in the southern hemisphere which lights up the sky. Was unable to take any photos due to rain and light pollution

New Zealand (Queenstown)

- ◆ Sites of note
 - ◆ Skyline Gondola and restrurant (overlooks like and town)
 - ◆ Skyline Stargazing tour – Tour given above the town shielded from light pollution. Included sky tour of my main objectives (Alpha Centauri, Southern Cross)
 - ◆ Night photos including view of LMC and SMC
- ◆ Conditions – Weather changes quickly, 30 minutes can go from cloudy to clear. Low light pollution and nearly none above the town at the stargazing tour.
- ◆ Thoughts – Amazing, unbelievable... my future retirement home. Conditions change quickly but this was the first place I saw the LMC, SMC, Alpha Centuari, and the Sourthern Cross

New Zealand (Auckland)

- ◆ Sites of note
 - ◆ Sky Tower – Space needle
- ◆ Conditions – Just like the cities in Australia, very cloudy and lots of light pollution. Would not recommend this as a destination for night sky people.
- ◆ Thoughts – Again, very much like Australia where cloud cover and light pollution made it difficult to enjoy a night sky.

Fiji (coral coast)

- ◆ Sites of note
 - ◆ Coral Coast – strategic location that faces the southern sky
- ◆ Conditions – Had wonderful conditions each day. Had excellent views of LMC and SMC. Alpha Centuari and Southern Cross don't come up until very late in the morning. Milky way was easily viewable and light pollution was only due to lamps in the resort area. But there was spots to get to dark hidden areas for good photos
- ◆ Thoughts – Resort service and stay was ok. The country is very poor. The night sky viewing was excellent!

Notes

- ◆ Southern Cross moves around the sky... a lot!
- ◆ Favorite Photos taken
 - ◆ Queenstown
 - ◆ Fiji
- ◆ Must sees!
 - ◆ Sydney – go to the observatory
 - ◆ New Zealand – stay on south island
 - ◆ Fiji at a resort that faces the southern sky for unobstructed views