

DAY 1 The coach departs Sydney in the morning and travels via the Hume Freeway then the Monaro and Snowy Mountains Highways to Adaminaby for the first evening - stopping along the way in the Southern Highlands for morning tea then later in Canberra for lunch.

DAY 2. On our departure from the Snowy Mountains Motel this morning we will first travel the short distance to view Lake Eucumbene from near the site of the Old Adaminaby township. Then through tall mountain ash forests to the higher plains and grassland country around Kiandra. At Kiandra we depart the Snowy Mountains Highway and travel south first to Cabramurra then down to and across the wall of the Tumut Pond Dam. Here we see the first of the once magnificent mountain forests decimated by fires over the last decade – unfortunately the sight of these skeleton forests is going to become commonplace on our journey these next several days. If the weather is comfortable we will stop for morning tea next to the beautiful high country marshland which follows here the course of Ogilvie’s Creek. Beyond this delightful spot we descend the western side of the Main Range down to the valley of Khancoban where we join the Alpine Way. After lunch in a small Khancoban café we will stop for a guided inspection of the Murray 1 Power Station in the Snowy Mountains Scheme. Then through the forested western escarpments beyond Scammell’s Spur to drop in on a park-like setting on the banks of the Geehi River; here we are directly below the Mt Kosciusko, Mt Townsend summits – that place called the Geehi Walls of the Snowy Mountains. In the later afternoon we continue along the Alpine Way down to Tom Groggin at the headwaters of the Murray River. From Tom Groggin we begin the long climb up and around the southern spur of the Main Range, over the saddle at Dead Horse Gap and into Thredbo for an evening at the Thredbo Alpine Hotel.

DAY 3 Across the Monaro Plains, through the forests of East Gippsland, today we are going down to the Victorian Coast at Lakes Entrance. After breakfast in the hotel we travel down to the eastern end of the Alpine Way at Jindabyne, on the shores of the lake of the same name. Almost as soon as we depart to the south east from Jindabyne we are out onto those magnificent and vast rolling grasslands of the Monaro Plains. Backed to the west by the Southern Alps these plains stretch away to our eastern horizon for several hours. Our crossing of the Snowy River at Dalgety is marked by the spectacular colours of autumn created by the many exotic trees which proliferate on these plains wherever early Europeans settled this country. We stop here at a café for morning tea – then back onto the plains all the way down to Bombala where we will have lunch in the Mailcoach Inn. From Bombala we are once again back onto the Snowy Mountains Highway; but now from this small mountain town the highway drops away from the tablelands and down into the forests of East Gippsland. The Snowy Mountains highway comes to its end when it reaches the Princes Highway (Highway 1) at Cann River. Continuing on through these greatest of Australian forests we travel west towards Orbost – leaving that highway down to the coast where the Snowy River discharges through the Lake Corngle estuary into Bass Strait. Then on through Orbost to our third evening together – this time at Lakes Entrance.

DAY 4 From Lakes Entrance this morning we turn north at Swan Reach to follow the Tambo River flowing south through here from the Victorian Alps. At this end the river traverses fertile river flats and we pass through lush farming country in the early morning. At Bruthen we join the Great Alpine Highway, staying on this highway for the rest of today up and over the Victorian Alps. The highway continues to follow the course of the Tambo River, now winding its way into the foothills of the Alps. Passing through the small settlements of Ensay and Swifts Creek we will take a morning tea break in a café on the main street of Omeo. From the valley that protects Omeo against the winds of the Alps it is a relatively short steep climb to the high country of Dinner Plains and Mt Hotham – stopping on the way up for a distant view of the summit of Mt Kosciusko away to the north. From the very top of Mt Hotham the rolling mountain range extends to the horizon in every direction – these mountains always merging with the sky in that blue haze which is so much a part of this kind of country in Australia. Unlike Australia's other ski resorts the village of Mt Hotham has been constructed right at the summit of the mountain – and so from our route the ski runs disappear down the steepest slopes below the coach. This is a spectacular resort by any measure. After lunching on or somewhere near the summit we descend down the winding Alpine Road through forests often scarred by recent bushfires, into the Ovens Valley. Through the small town of Harrietville to Bright, that Victorian mountain town which is renowned for its autumn colours. We will be spending two nights in Bright - plenty of time to absorb the beauty of autumn on foot and otherwise along the many canopied streets of this town.

DAY 5 Today we are going to secure the services of a local guide who will join our coach for the whole day. Whilst the guide will mostly choose the itinerary - by the measure of autumn scenery, the summit and the sheer granite walls of Mt Buffalo, and the town of Beechworth will certainly be included on today's tour; starting out with a wander this morning through Bright itself – our motel is located an easy 500 meter walk from the centre of town along perhaps the most significant tree lined avenue of all – Delaney Street.

DAY 6 We leave Bright this morning to climb across that mountain spur which separates the Ovens Valley from the Kiewa Valley – from Bright across to Mt Beauty. Before leaving the Ovens Valley we travel to the beautiful National Trust classified village of Wandiligong for Devonshire tea. Later, and beyond Mt Beauty, we climb to the south again, this time to the top of the range beyond Falls Creek – our destination is the Bogong High Plain. In these parts we are travelling through the Victorian Alpine National Park on a road which is closed by snow in the winter months every year. From the high plains we turn back down the Kiewa Valley Highway through Mt Beauty and on to our motel with mountain views just outside of Yackandandah.

DAY 7 This day we leave the Alps to begin the return journey to Sydney. Rather than following the somewhat monotonous freeway from Albury to Sydney our route will travel through the Central West of New South Wales, joining the Olympic Way at Wagga. Leaving Yackandandah we travel around Albury and Wodonga on the new freeway by-pass then turn to the north-west through Walbundrie to Lockhart (the 'Verandah Town'). In this pretty Central West town we will take a break at Carolyn's

Café before setting out on the road to Wagga and then up the Olympic Highway as far as Bethungra and a lunch stop in an old and unique stone hotel which these days is a ‘Bed and Breakfast’ establishment. At Bethungra we will leave the highway for a short while to visit a 100 year old dam and a remarkable piece of railway engineering. Late in the afternoon we will arrive for our final night – this time at the Hilltops Retreat Motel in Young.

DAY 8 This day is devoted to our safe return to Sydney. Continuing along the Olympic Highway as far as Blayney we then travel some winding country roads through Rockley, Tarana and Sodwalls – the courses of so many creeks through this country marked by the stands of poplars in their autumn gold and yellows. Back to the main highway at Lithgow, then over the Blue Mountains via Bells Line of Road. Back into Sydney mid afternoon after our last lunch together perhaps in the old but wonderfully restored hotel at Rockley. And thus this journey to some of the most magnificent parts of Australia’s alpine regions will come to an end.