

*The Australian birthday journey of  
Alexander Duncan MacDonald (Sandy)  
July 7th—July 21st, 2025*



**Volume One - Brisbane**

Late in August 2025 I received a telephone call from my Son Regan, who lives in Brisbane, Australia.

The message was brief but surprising — *“Hi Dad. I am coming over for your birthday on Saturday (July 5th). I will be arriving on Friday and then leaving to return home on Monday, **with you!**”*

My body buzzed with surprise and excitement. We conversed for a short while before hanging up.

On Saturday 5th July I celebrated my 80th birthday, being hosted by Janferay McAnnalley at her home with her family members (Nathan, Ammon, Emmerson, Caleb and Jarom), Yvette & Gary Bell, Jacinda and her family (Ken, Brooke & Alisa) along with Stancy (my sister) and her daughter Jennie Koolen. Must not forget Lynn!

# Monday July 7th, 2025

Regan had arrived in a Brisbane-Auckland flight the previous Friday and had been “awarded” a car by Jacinda to drive south to Ngaruawahia on Friday 4th for bed and breakfast at his “old home” at 2 Albert Place.

Mum (Lynn) undertook house-sitting responsibilities for the Cox family house on Hamilton for almost all of July and the beginning of August while the family were overseas.

At 12 noon on the morning of Monday July 7th Regan and I headed for the Auckland airport for the 3:50pm flight to Brisbane.

On the way there was a brief traffic hold-up where a trailer carrying a digger had come loose

from the towing vehicle and was on its side near the crash barrier north of Rangiriri. The traffic was slow for about a kilometer.

Arrived at the airport at 1:35pm and parked in the multi-level car-park building. Checked in and then sat for a snack at the public food hall.

The Prattley ladies (Jacinda, Brooke and Elisa) arrived soon after. We “burgerised” and chatted, then Regan handed over the keys to their car and then he and I headed off to customs at 2:30pm.

There were no problems getting through as Regan was my mentor and guide!

We waited at Gate 15 and found there was a 30-minute delay.

**AIR NEW ZEALAND** 

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 



MACDONALD MR ALEXAN-

THE WORKS

MACDONALD MR ALEX

FROM: AUCKLAND  
TO: BRISBANE  
DATE: 07JUL

FLIGHT: **NZ 147**

FLIGHT: NZ 147  
FROM: AKL TO: BNE  
DATE: 07JUL

ESTIMATED BOARDING: **15:50** PM

GATE:

SEAT: **12E**

ESTIMATED BOARDING: 15:50 PM

COMMENTS:

AIRPOINTS:

BAG TAG NO: NZ096603

BNE

BAG TAG NO:

PASSPORT NO:

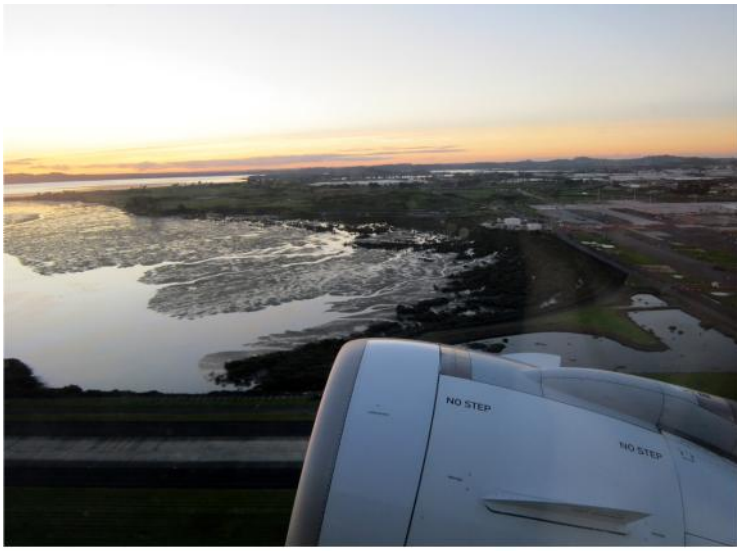
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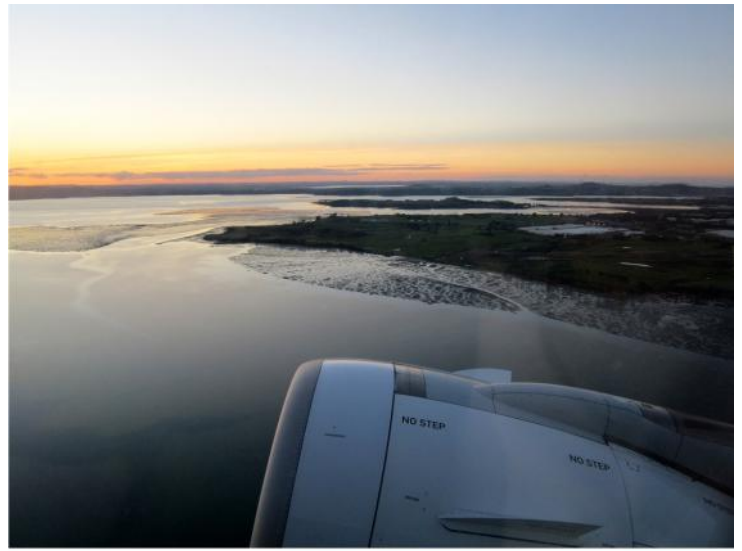
SEAT:

**12E**

KE21



Departing New Zealand for Brisbane.



Departing Auckland for Brisbane.

My seat was 12E beside the window (perfect). The plane took off at 5:00pm.

The flight was good. I did not watch any movies or listen to any music as the ear plugs supplied were too big to fit my ear-holes!

Had a nice chicken meal an hour into the flight.

Landed at Brisbane airport 6:30pm Brisbane time and got

through customs very quickly. We were picked up by Danielle (Regan's wife) and driven to Andre's, arriving at 7:45pm.

Chatted with Shannon, Andre, Hannah and Aliyana. Their dog Motley was extremely yappy. Sat with the girls and played a board game.

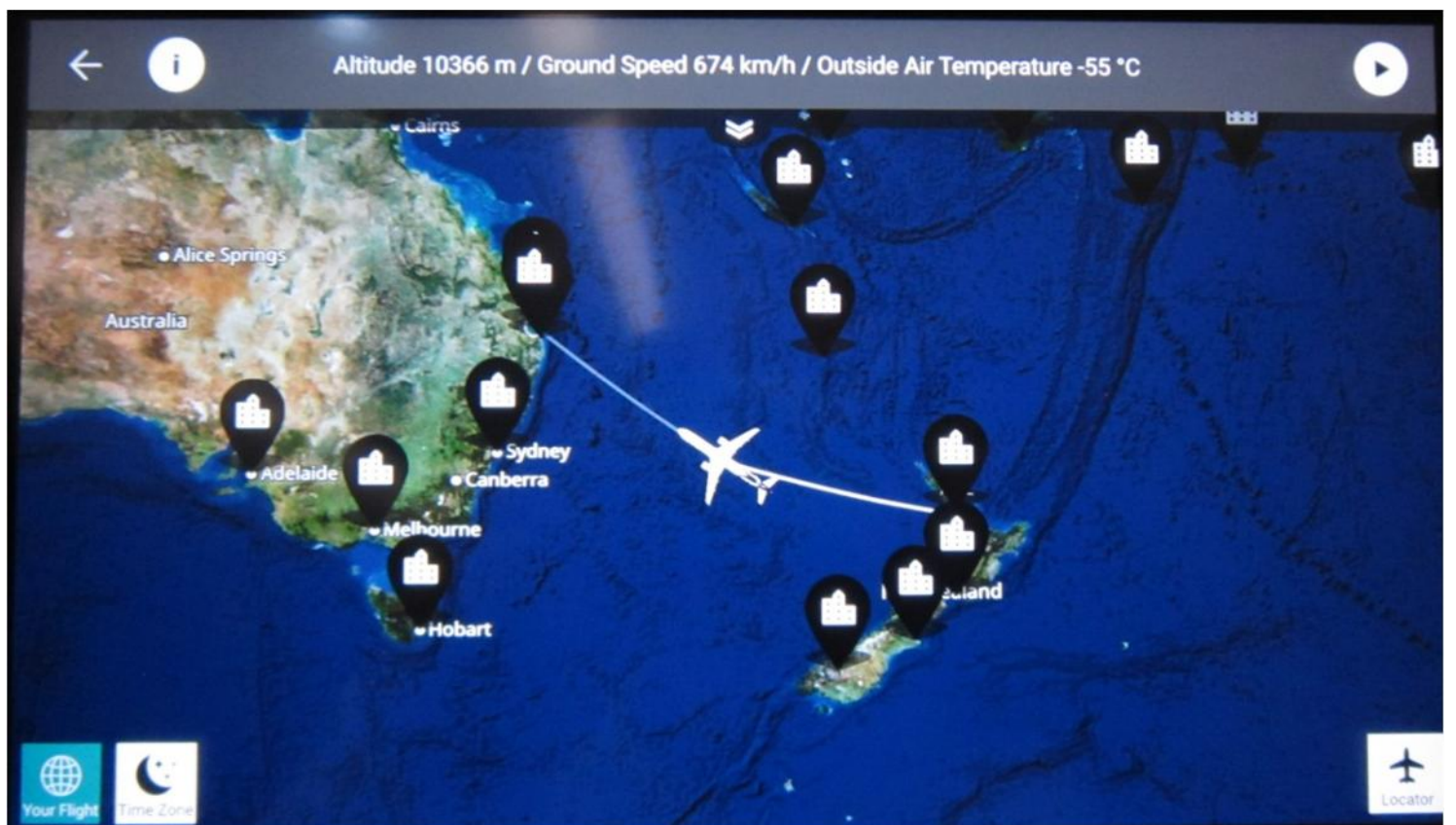
I was assigned Aliyana's room for my stay. Bedded at 9:20pm.



Meal on the flight to Brisbane.



**Plane flight map when departing Auckland for Brisbane.**



**Plane flight map when half-way to Brisbane.**

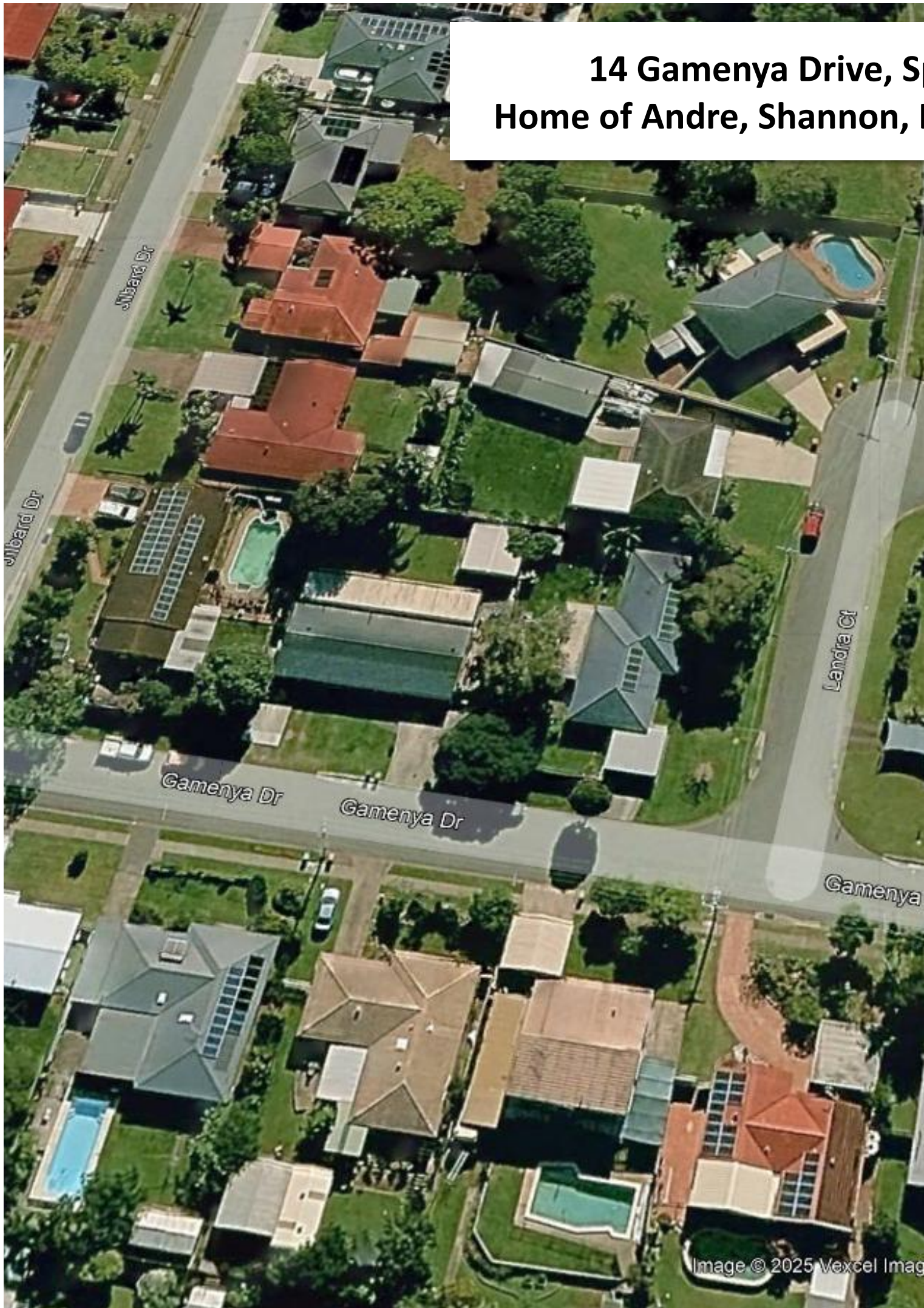


**14 Gamenya Drive**  
**Home of Andre, S**



Springwood, Queensland.  
Shannon, Hannah & Aliyana.

**14 Gamenya Drive, S**  
**Home of Andre, Shannon, I**



Springwood, Queensland.  
Hannah & Aliyana MacDonald.





**Andre and Shannon's h**



home. [13th July 2025].

# Tuesday July 8th, 2025

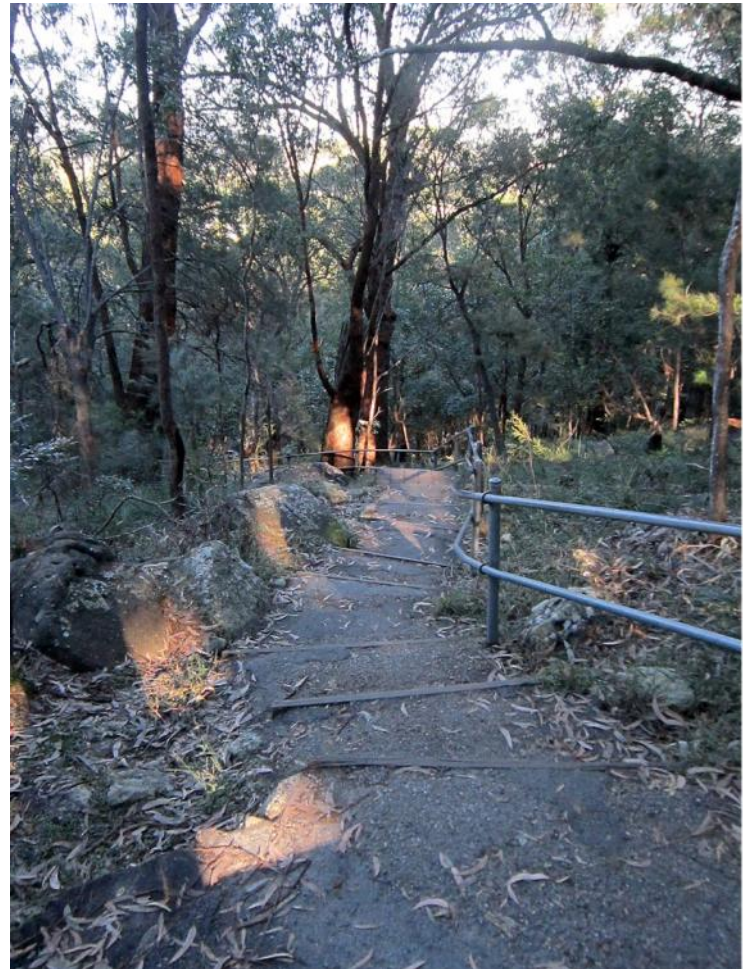
Up at 7:00am. The family dog, Motley, was very nervous with me in the house and would frequently react with series of shrill barks.

Andre plans to fix the expel-air above the shower in the bathroom which had recently “died”.

Took a walking trip with the family along the local Gorge Discovery Walk in the Springwood hills with Shannon, Hannah and Aliyana. Some of the steep parts are due to rocky

outcrops and required a little bit of leg muscle.

Back at home I played cards with the girls Hannah and Aliyana while Andre toiled away with the expel-air replacement in





the bathroom.

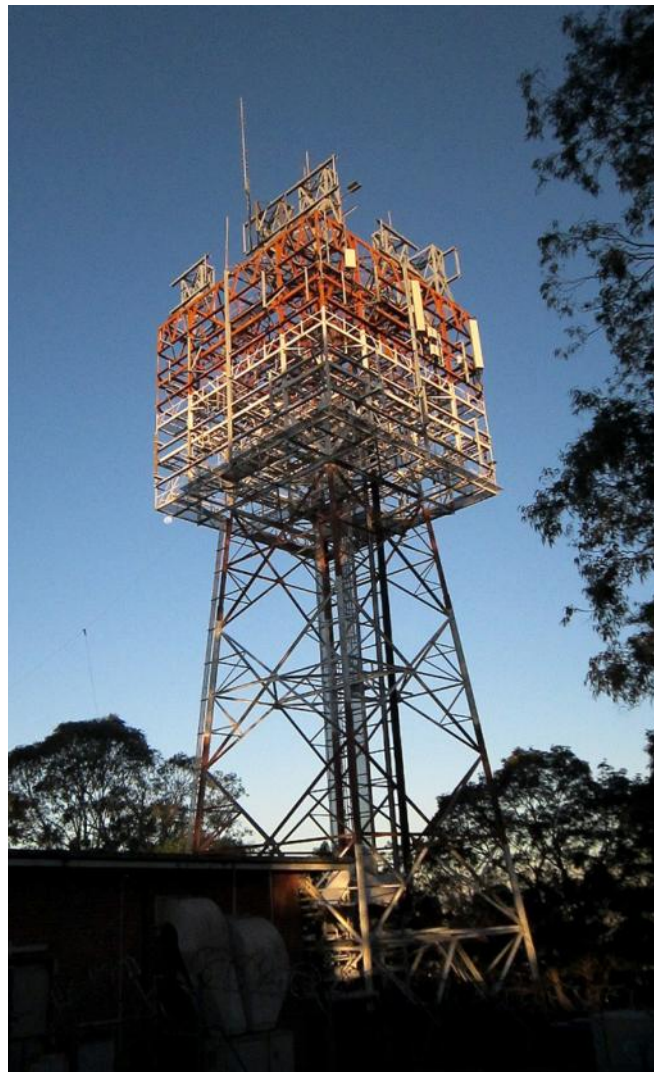
The family and I headed out to do some shopping and drove past the girls' schools (local school holidays this week). Home at 12:30pm.

The dog Molley has a very high-pitched and loud bark when anything she sees or hears disturbs her. It appears that if something appears out of the ordinary she reacts loudly.

Because of this I have Shannon's permission to post on her Facebook account.

At 4:30pm we all headed off to Mount Cravatt lookout to watch the sun set over Brisbane. There was not a single cloud in the sky, which made for an unspectacular show.

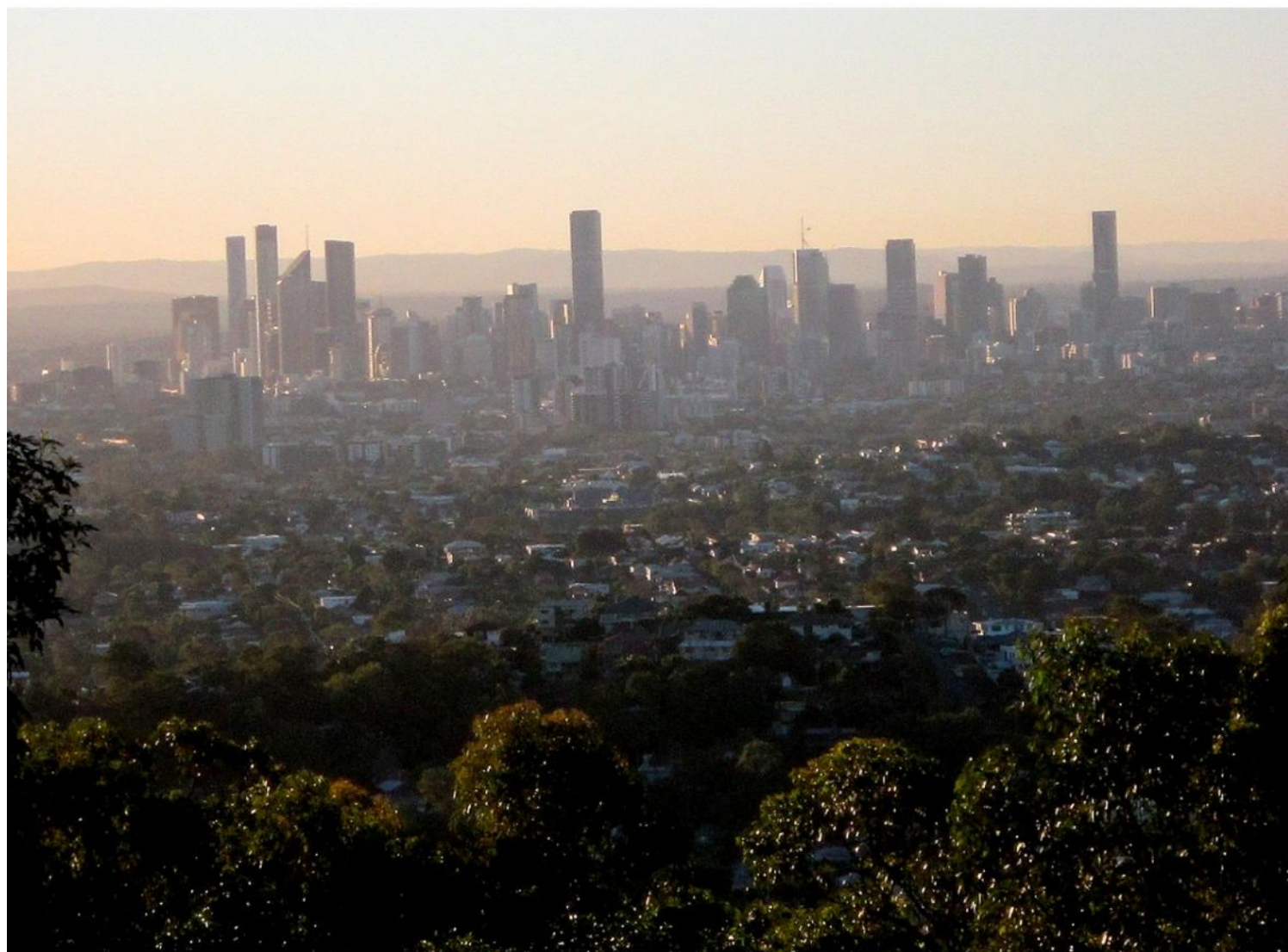
We had delicious tacos for the evening meal.



**Communications Tower  
on Mt Gravatt.**



**Visitors Centre atop Mount Gravatt. [8 July 2025]**



**Brisbane City viewed from Mount Gravatt. [8 July 2025]**





**Hannah, Shannon, Aliyana & Andre  
waiting for the sunset over Brisbane on Mount Gravatt. [8 July 2025]**







**VIDEO (3m 42s)**



# Wednesday July 9th, 2025

Headed off family shopping at 9am at Target. Shoes for Aliyana.

Back home I played a game called Scattergories with the girls.

Headed off to Wellington Point at 12:30pm. This is where, at low tide, you can walk out to the distant island.

Took about 40 minutes to get there, followed by a loooooong

trek to get out to the island along the exposed sand bar. The tide was still receding as we began our walk.

I enjoyed the trek. There were many very small crabs scabbling around on the edge of the exposed “shoreline”.

On the way home we called in to a shopping centre, followed by joining (at 3pm) the voluminous and slow traffic flow towards home on the motorway.



Wellington Point. [9 July 2025]



**Shannon, Hannah & Aliyana at Wellington Point. [9 July 2025]**





**Wellington Point low tide. [9 July 2025]**





**Andre, Shannon, Hannah & Aliyana off to the Wellington Point island.**



**Wellington Point island. [9 July 2025]**





**Wellington Point island. [9 July 2025]**





**Andre, Aliyana, Hannah & Shannon on Wellington Point island.**

# A little island with a *big history*

### A holiday destination

The opening of the railway line to Cleveland on 1 November 1889 saw an influx of tourists to Wellington Point and King Island. In 1915, Queensland Railways ran newspaper advertisements promoting Wellington Point and other coastal locations along the train line as top holiday destinations. Wellington Point was popular at Christmas time for sailors and campers seeking a seaside holiday.



### Home to a large family

Between December 1904 and April 1906, the Phillips family of seven children and a maid lived on King Island. On medical advice, they moved to the island so their daughter Jo, a polio sufferer, could bathe daily in the salt water. Their temporary dwelling consisted of a main sleeping marquee with a wooden floor and a bell tent for the older three boys. The dining-room and kitchen were situated under a large cotton tree. Much of their food was sourced from around the island with fresh water brought over from the mainland. Mr Phillips continued to commute to Brisbane for work, making the journey each day across to Wellington Point in a dinghy.



### Shell grit by farmers

Wellington Point's rich fertile soil was ideal for farming. All kinds of crops were grown with poultry farms common in the area. In the early 1900s poultry farmers began collecting sand from Wellington Point and the sandbanks around King Island to use as shell grit. By the 1930's the amount being removed was a problem and steps were put in place to police the practice.



### WWII target practice

In June 1943, the American Navy set up a camp and gunnery range at the tip of Wellington Point that was home to about 1500 men. The Navy camp blocked access to all but the kiosk and jetty, putting a stop to camping at Wellington Point. Regular shooting practice was undertaken and involved a silk target being towed behind a plane. When shooting finished the silk target was dropped into the sea and local women would row out to collect the silks to make bedspreads. During this time King Island served as a target for bombing practice.

Information sourced from local historians Mary Howells and Peter Ludford.






Wellington Point  
Island's short walkway.  
[9 July 2025]

**VIDEO (57s)**



Wellington Point Island's high tide line. [9 July 2025]



**Wellington Point Island looking back to the mainland. [9 July 2025]**



**Wellington Point  
Recreation Reserve**

In an emergency dial 000 & quote  
**RDS104**

**WARNING**



**NO LIFESAVING  
SERVICE**



**SUBMERGED  
OBJECTS**



**DROP OFF**



**STINGERS  
(UNDERWATER)**  
May be present

**CAUTION!**  
IS STRONGLY  
ADVISED IN THIS  
AQUATIC AREA



**CHILDREN MUST  
BE SUPERVISED**

**REGULATIONS**



**DOGS PERMITTED -  
MUST BE ON A LEASH AT ALL TIMES**



Regulations can be amended at Council discretion



**Redland  
CITY COUNCIL**

*Thursday July 10th, 2025*



**Arriving at Mount Coot-Tha Botanic Gardens.**

Gave the girls some paper puzzles to confuse them!

We all headed out to Mount Coot-tha at 9:00am to look out over the city of Brisbane as well as to see the botanic gardens and the Planetarium.

Walked through the gardens and finding the differing species of plant life fascinating, especially the bonsai trees.



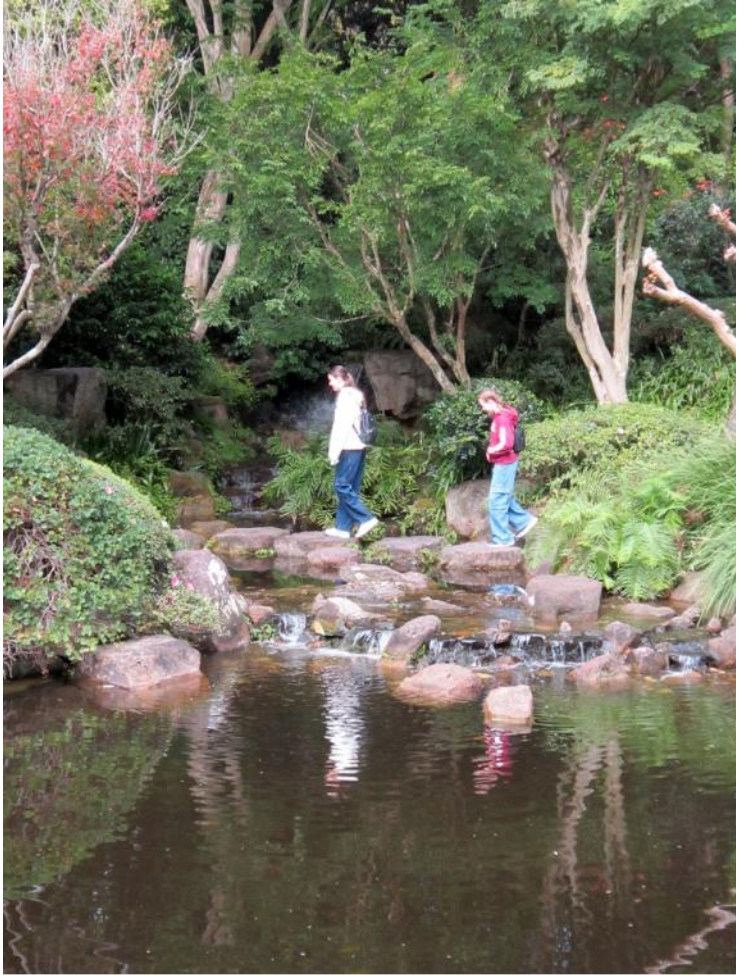
**Mount Coot-Tha Botanical Gardens  
[10 July 2025]**

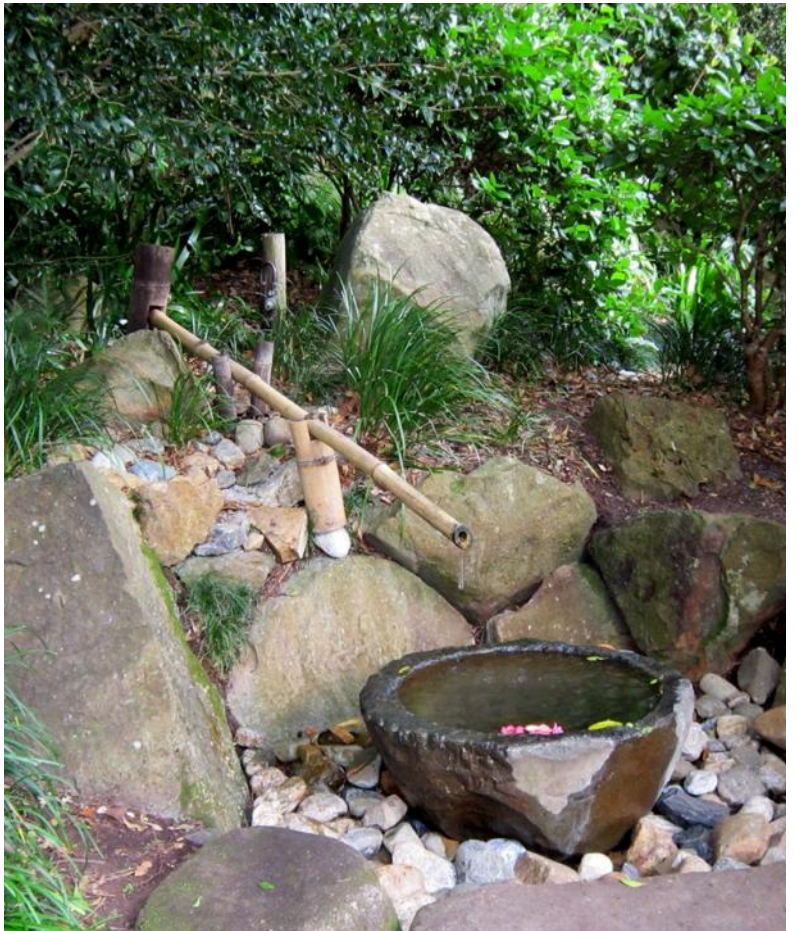


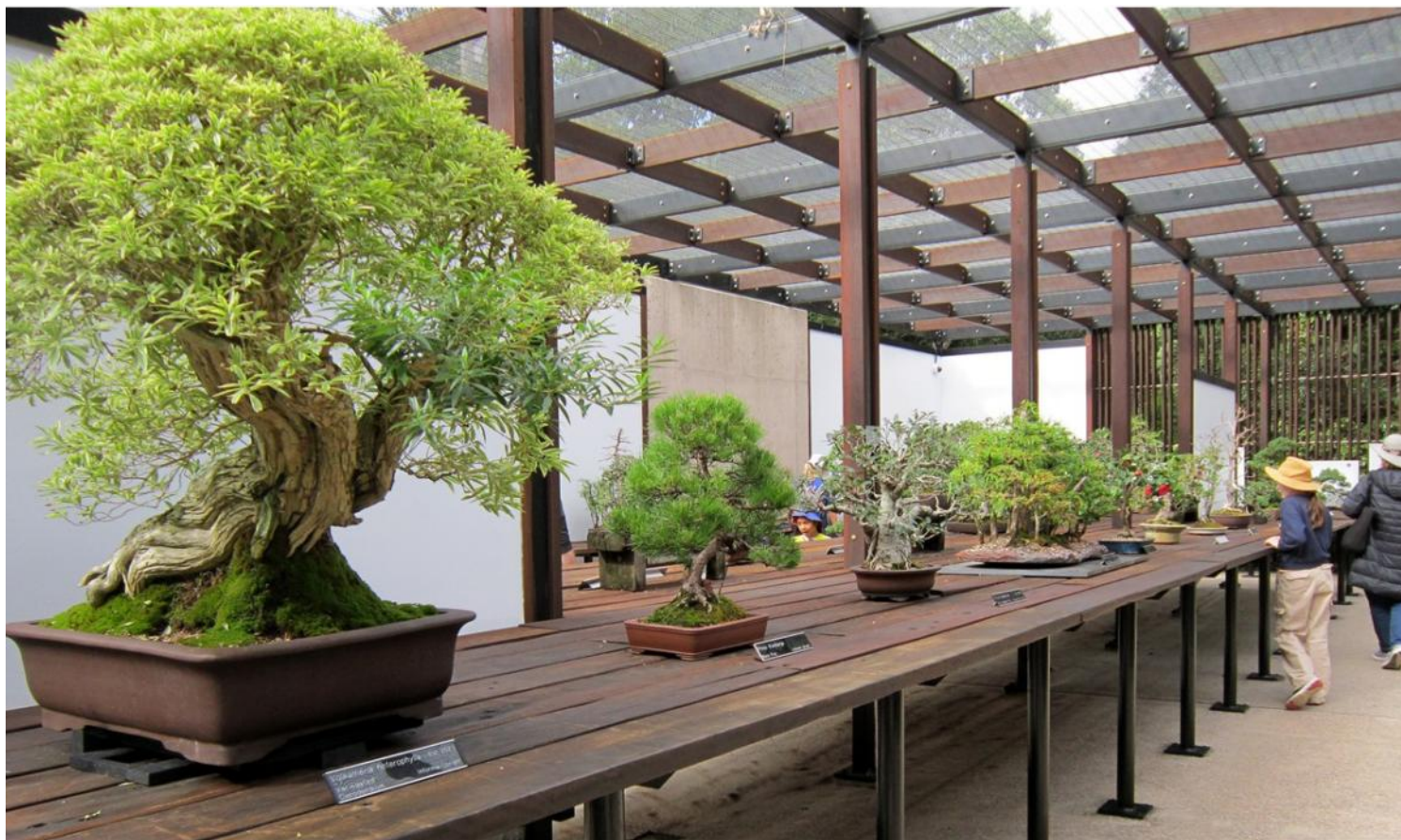
**Driving to Mount Coot-Tha.**





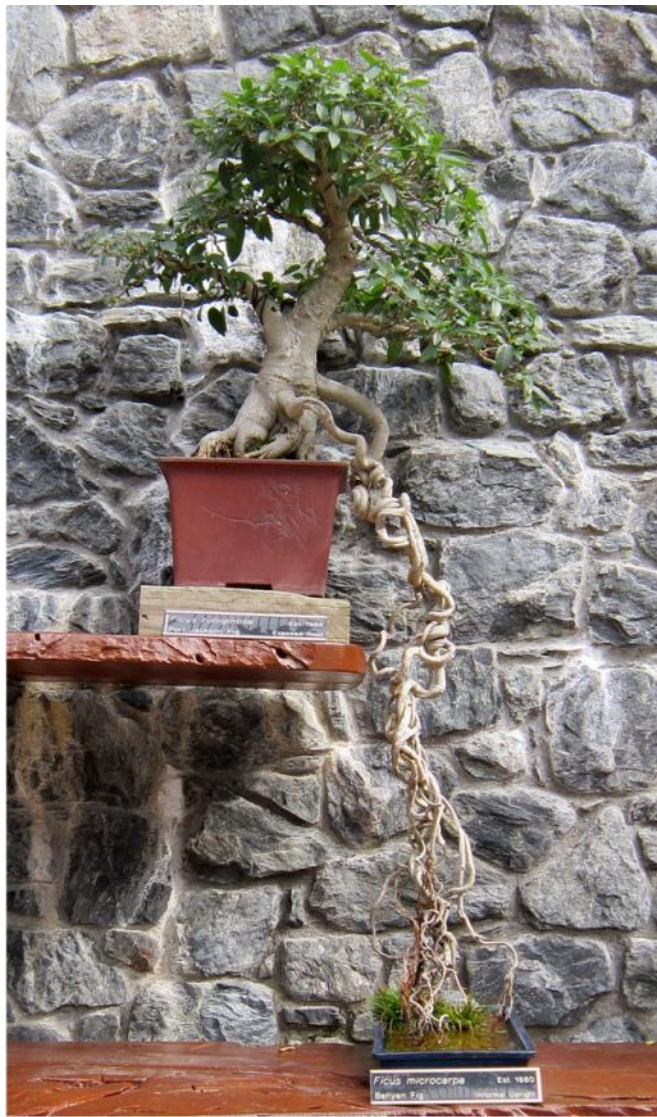






**Bonsai tree collection at Mount Coot-Tha Botanical Gardens**







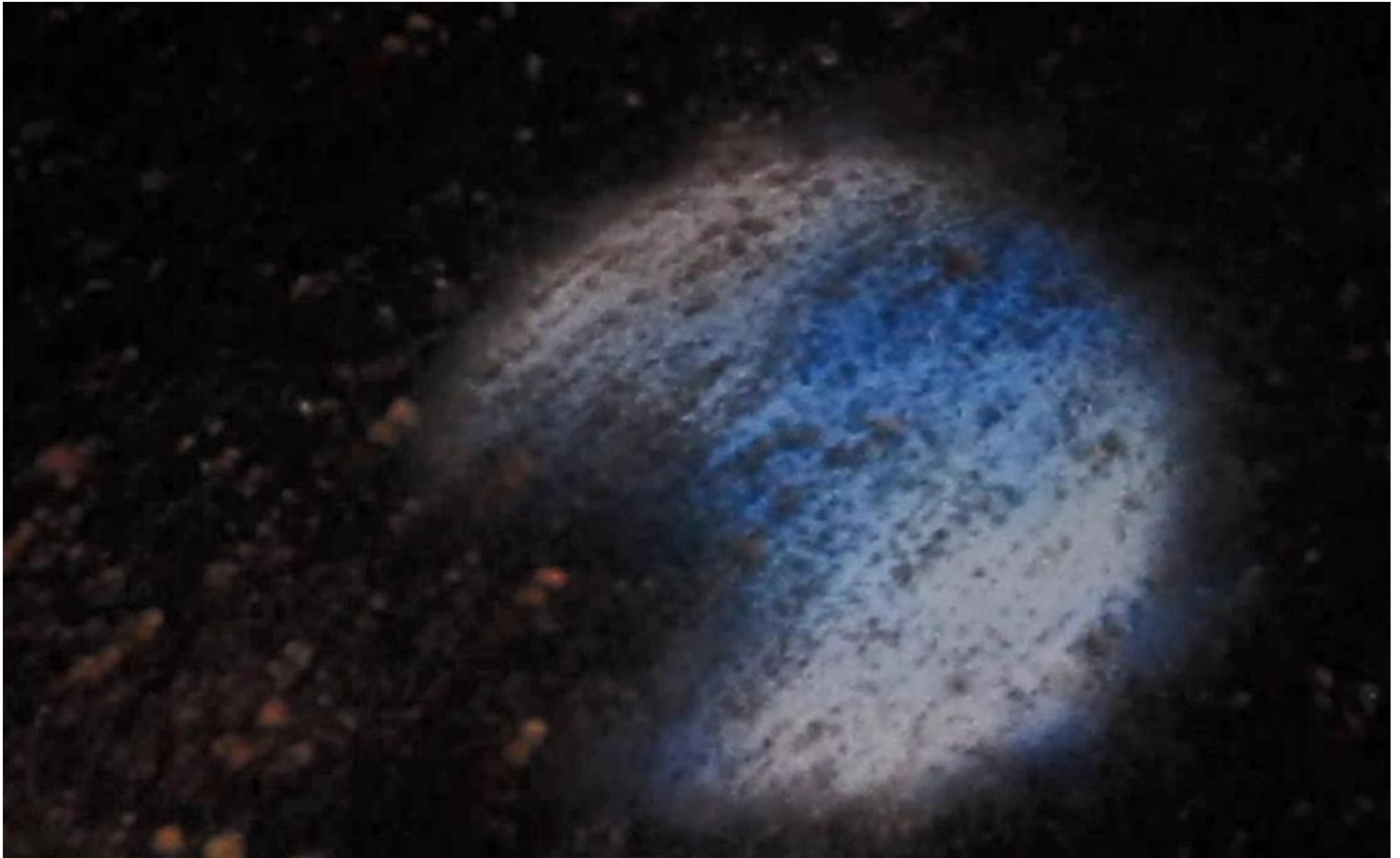
**BOTANIC GARDENS VIDEO (1m 11s)**



**Gardeners at Mount Coot-Tha Botanical Gardens.**

In the Planetarium I set my camera on my knees, focussing it up towards the domed ceiling where all the video action was happening. The camera ran out of battery power ten minutes into the brilliant showing of the planetary systems!

I enjoyed the road journey back home with its interesting landscapes. The return trip took about five hours out of the day.



### **PLANETARIUM VIDEO (3m 26s)**

Shannon vacuumed in the afternoon, which sent the dog Molly crazy! Lots of loud high-pitched barking.

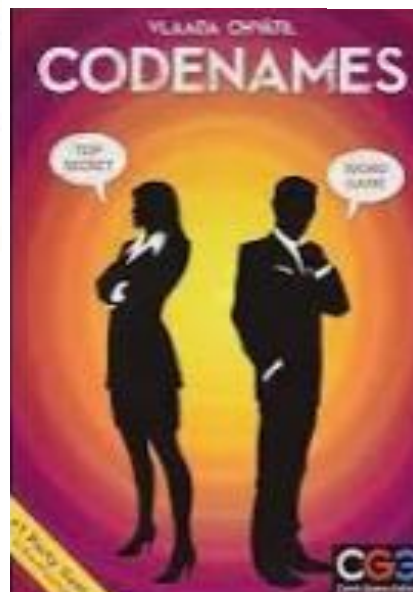
At home I recharged the battery of my video camera. When I reset the battery in the camera I got the message “Memory Card Locked!”. Both Andre and I fiddled with the memory card, making sure it was

seated in the camera slot securely - still no change in its response.

Then Andre blew into the card slot, replaced the card, and the camera stopped being “defensive”!

In the early evening I took a walk around the local area, noticing that a number of stores were no longer doing business.

*A few of the myriad of board games that the girls chose to challenge me with.*



# Friday July 11th, 2025

Shopping day 8;30am to 10:00pm. The girls stayed at home while I volunteered to be the shopping-trolley pusher and basket carrier. The girls would resume schooling on Monday and some items were needed.

Hannah was practicing her

violin this morning. I took the opportunity to video her as well as Aliyana on the piano. The girls also challenged each other on their violins!

Aliyana had dance lessons (4pm to 5pm) today and was “dropped off”.





**Aliyana's Canine Collection  
on the following three pages . . . . .**













# Saturday July 12th, 2025



Regan arrived to collect me and head off to his daughter Jean's archery practice. There were four archers and their coach. One of the team members will be representing Australia at the World Archery Championships next March (2026).

The park was huge and



Jean's arrows are the orange ones.

included sealed tracks for cycling and electric mini-car racing.

After archery we headed



**ARCHERY VIDEO (2m 26s)**



**Lunch at Finn's Fish House. [12 July 2025]**



**My piece of fish after six mouthfuls!. [12 July 2025]**



**I had to force my stomach to accept the final bites of the fish!  
The chips did not like being left un-consumed!  
[12 July 2025]**

home to collect Rose and drove to the Wynnum Beach for lunch. It is next to Manly.

I ordered fish and chips as the illustration of the meal on the menu seemed small enough for me. I was mistaken! I could barely finish off the fish and had to leave the chips on the plate.

After the meal we headed back to Regan's to chill out.

Regan had received a text message from Shannon that Andre had been taken to hospital with a kidney stone!

We picked him up that evening and found that his operation would be on Friday 18th July. He had a stent inserted in the meanwhile, along with painkiller medication.

**VIDEO: DRIVE TO THE BRISBANE HOSPITAL (2m 40s)**



**Wynnums Beach front pool being serviced.**



**Lunch at the dog-friendly Finn's Fish House. [12 July 2025]**

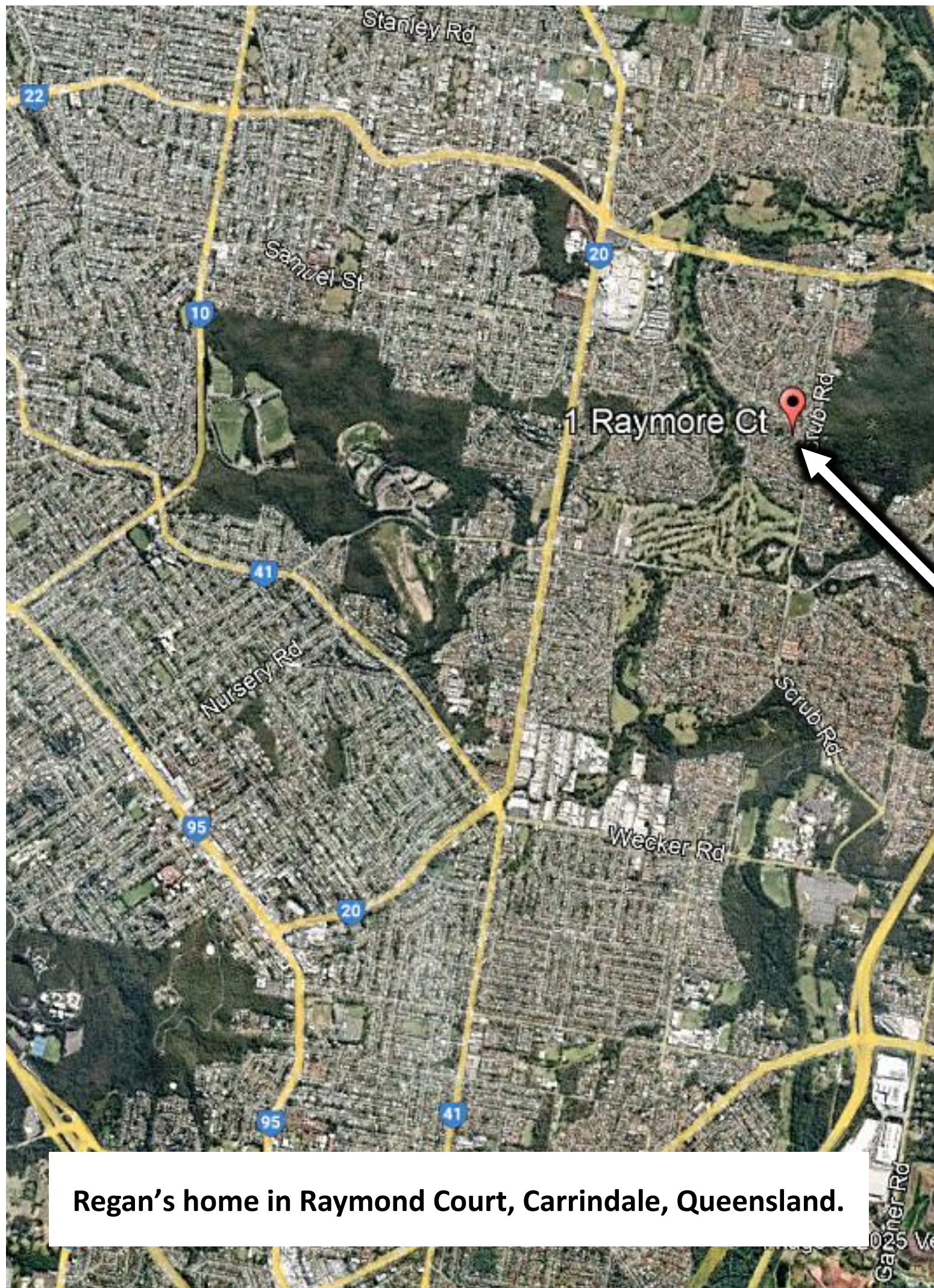


**Out on the pier at Wynnum's Beach, with Many in the far background.**

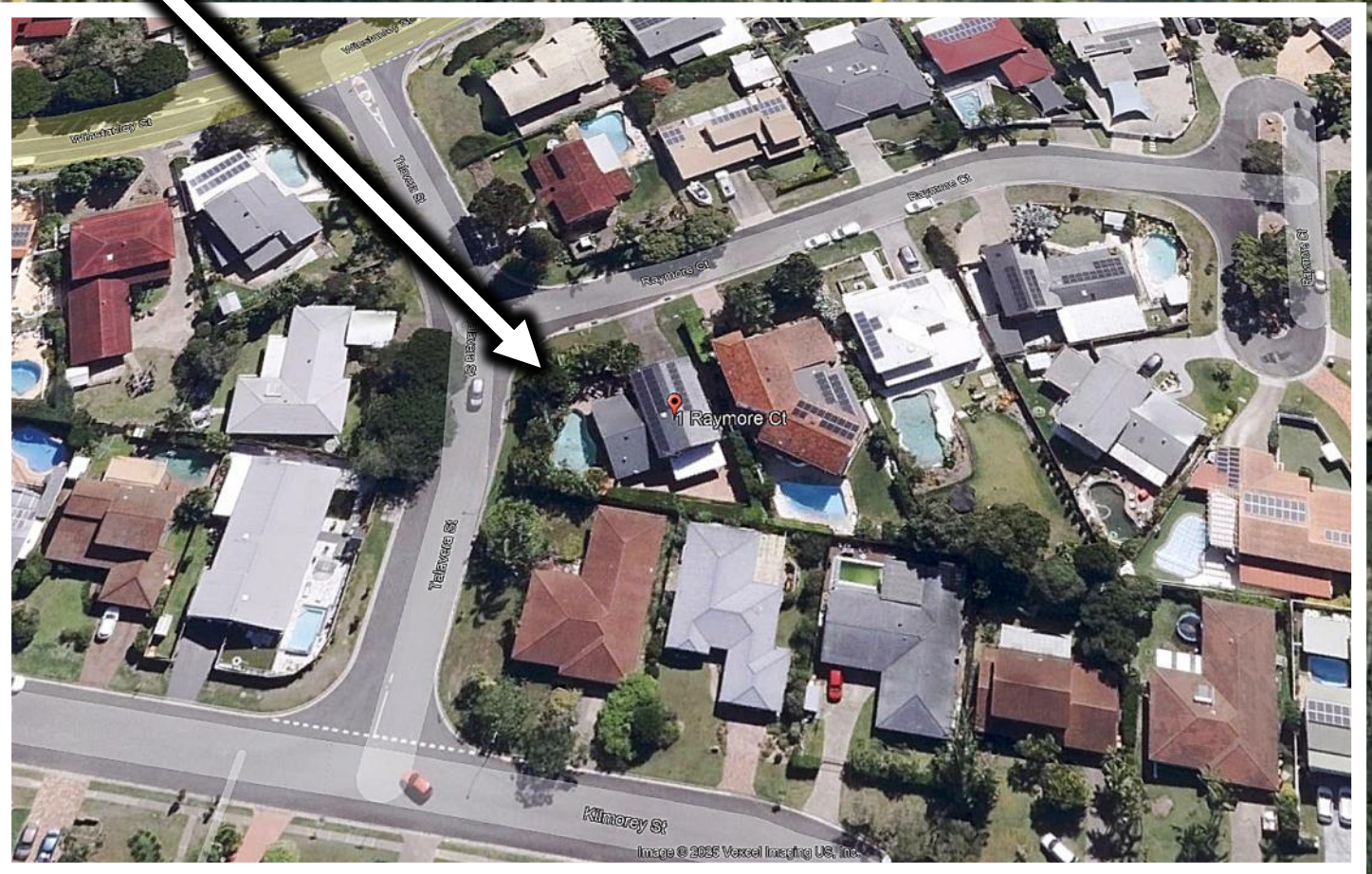
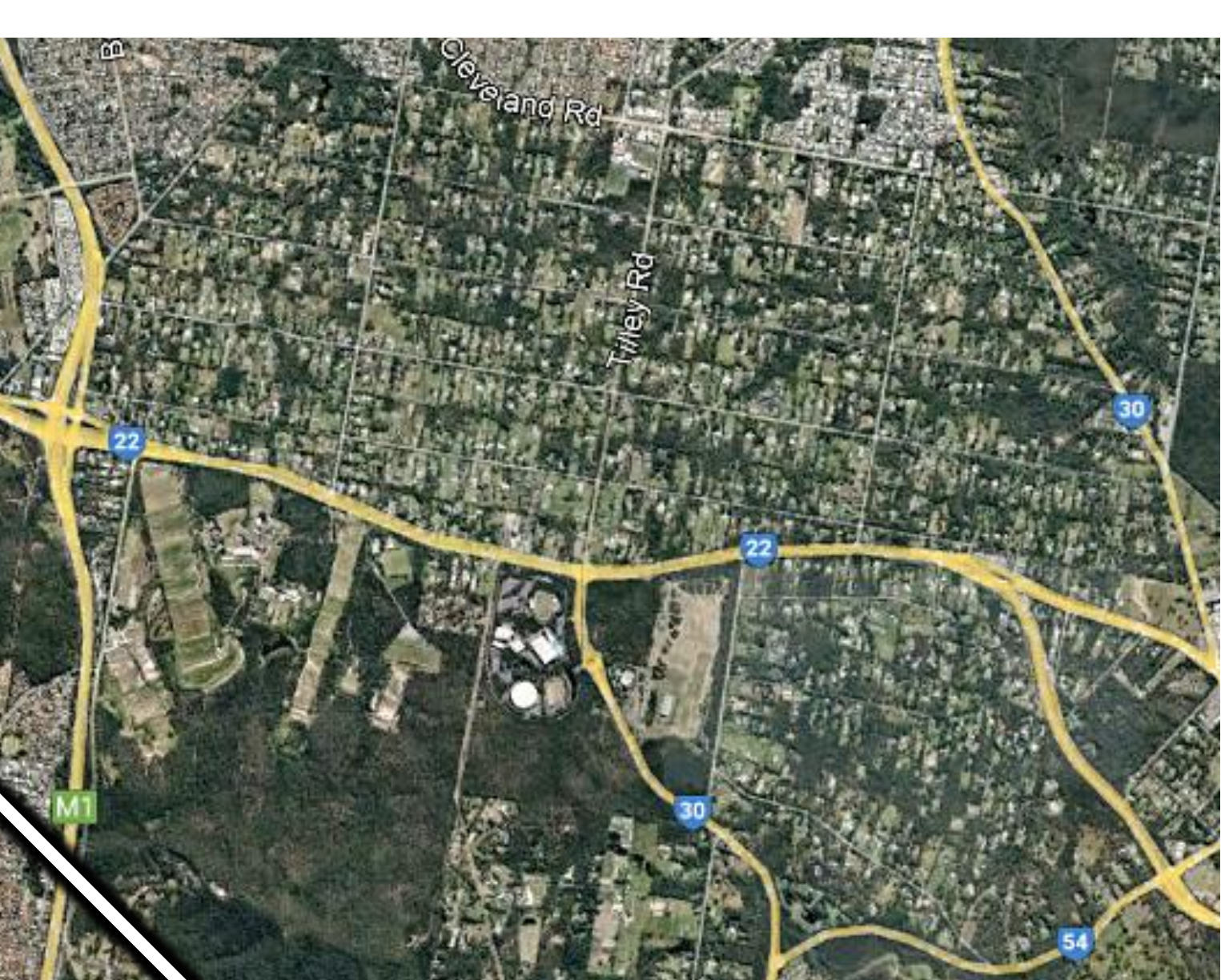


**VIDEO (2**





**Regan's home in Raymond Court, Carrindale, Queensland.**





**Regan's home on the road corner at 1 Ra**



Rose went back to Woolworths that same evening where she is employed as a “shelf decorator”.



**aymore Court, Carringdale, Queensland.**



I was taken back to Andre's where I had a bath (uncommon for baths in that household) and was reunited with a very loud Molly!

# Sunday July 13th, 2025

A very cool morning. Andre is feeling better. We are heading off to the Mall to help set up the cell-phones that Regan has given to Hannah and Aliyana.

The trip into the city will include some pre-school shopping as the girls commence

Term 3 at their respective schools tomorrow.

We did lots of walking around the South Mall complex. The journey was punctuated by lunch on the riverbank.

At the Mall I bought four squeeze-balls that were marked



**Hannah's violin.**



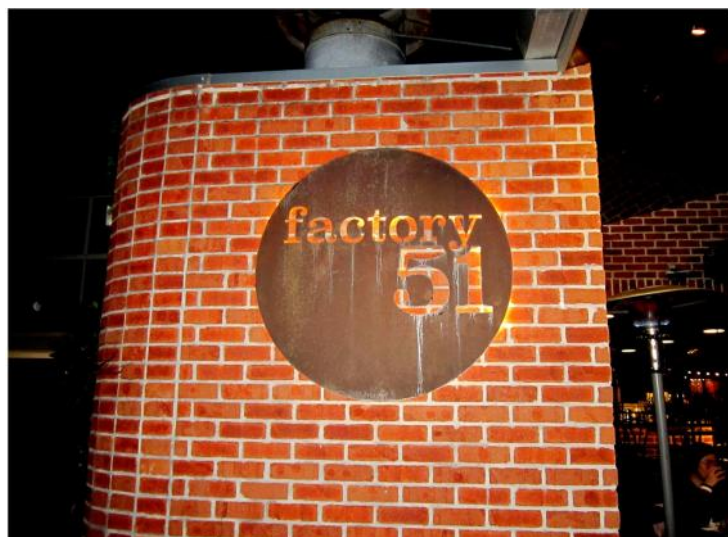
**"Musical Girls" Video (2m 13s)**

at \$4.99 each. At the counter it was told to me that if I bought 2 or more the price would be \$3.99 each (I could have bought 5!).

Home to relax before Regan picks me up for 16th birthday party for his daughters Rose and Jean.

Aliyana played “Mad World” on the organ/piano which I filmed. She almost made it to the end before striking a wrong note. She did two more repeats, hitting the wrong note at the same point of the music each time!

Regan arrived at 4pm to collect me for the birthday party at a restaurant, which was attended by 10 guests at the Factory 51 Italian Café.



**Rose and Jeans' birthday bash at the Factory 51 Cafe [13 July 2025]**



**The cake at Rose and Jeans birthday party.**



**The 16-year-old cake at the birthday party. [13 July 2025]**





**Two of the birthday celebrants [13th July 2025].**



**Danielle's father and Sandy chatting at the twins birthday party.  
[13 July 2025]**

**VIDEO: CUTTING THE CAKE (48s)**

*Monday July 14th, 2025*



Andre and I dropped off the girls to their respective schools by 8:30am. Hannah attends Springwood State High School

and Aliyana goes to Springwood Central State School.

As we sat in the car at the back of Aliyana's school, waiting



**Hannah and Aliyana ready for school [14 July 2025]**



for Shannon who had previously headed off on her regular morning walk, their dog Molly sat quietly on my lap while I stroked her. That was a rarity!

When we arrived back home Molly got back to her yappy and excited behaviour towards me!

In the afternoon we dropped Hannah off to her 3:45pm dance school where she tutors five junior dancers.

Then it was delivering Aliyana to her 4:45pm dance session.

The drop-offs and collections took about 15 minutes each way.



Andre cooked up a simple but delicious evening meal.



VIDEO: MOLLY (28s)

VIDEO: EVENING DRIVE ON THE FREEWAY (56s)

# *Tuesday July 15th, 2025*



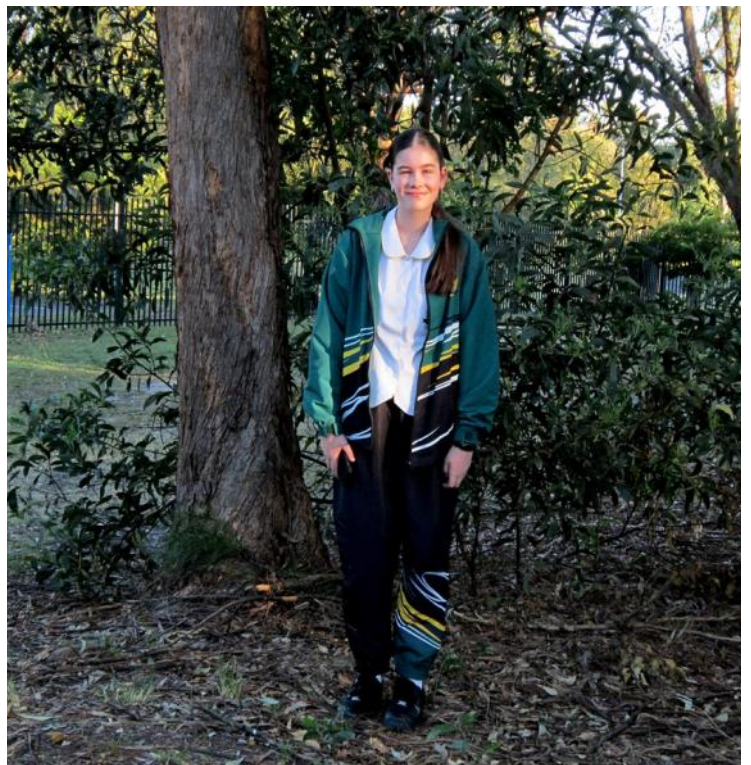
**Hannah heading off into school [15 July 2025]**

Everyone up early to get the girls to school by 7:30am! They had violin practice.

We dropped Aliyana and Shannon off at a Rest Home to visit Shannon's family to fill in time before Aliana was expected at her school.

Andre is expecting an 8am Doctor's phone call relating to his kidney-stone situation.

I wandered down to the local



roundabout where there is a long fence-mounted mural showing an aspect of the roundabout.

Wandered into a large shop retailing religious books all based on the Bible. There was a huge variety of books.

Shannon arrived back from her regular early-morning walk and we headed off to a couple of Malls where Andre had a haircut and we shopped for school luncheon additions for the girls.

Picked up the girls after school and Hannah had a 3:45pm orthodontist appointment to have her front missing tooth replaced.

Back home at 3:45pm for a “rapid tea” and then back out to take Hannah to her dancing lessons.

In the evening I headed out to the roundabout to take evening photos of the illuminated trees.



**Mural at a**





**local roundabout [15 July 2025]**





**The trees at the local roundabout were wired with lights for their regular nightly display.**



**Sunset [15 July 2025]**



# Wednesday July 16th, 2025

We took the girls to their schools and then left Shannon to walk home (part of her early morning walking regime)!

Andre and I shopped locally for a lolly-horde for each of the girls to surprise them when they got home from school, as I would be at Regan's by that time.

On the way home we stopped off to allow me to have a photo-shoot in front of a sign at a Toyota car sales business.

For lunch Andre had prepared a delicious pumpkin soup and then they both drove me to Regan's abode before they returned to pick up the girls from school.

I gossiped with Rose and Jean (Regan's twin girls) until Jean needed to be transported to her after-school job as a dog-carer/cleaner until 7pm.

Danielle's parents joined us for tea, then I hit the sack at 9pm.



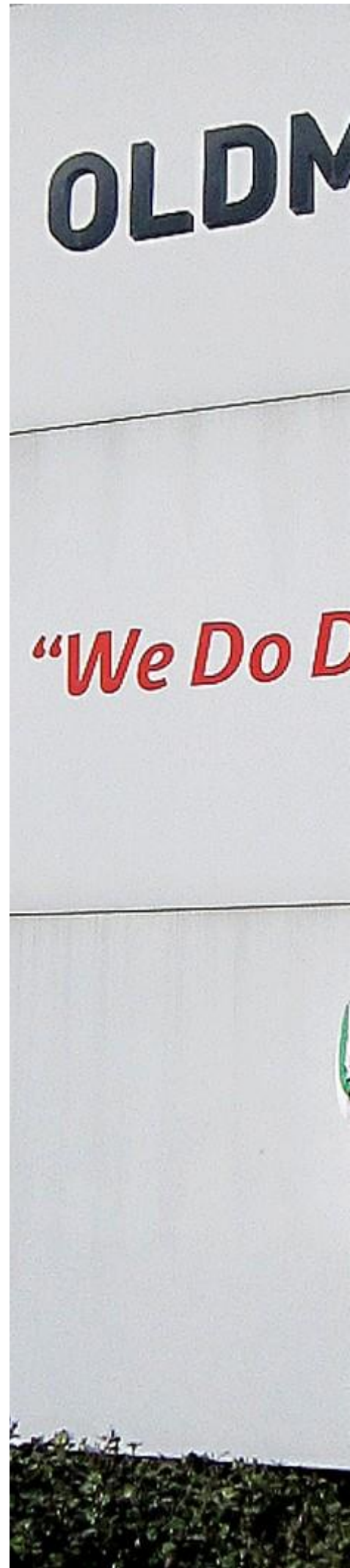
Aliyana's treasure trove from Papa [16 July 2025]



Hannah's treasure trove from Papa [16 July 2025]



Papa (Sandy) being someone else [16 July 2025]





**Rose and Jean being someone else [16 July 2025]**

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**VOLUME 2 - SYDNEY**