



**RAILWAY
ADVENTURES**

2023

VICTORIAN RAILWAY ADVENTURE



With Graeme Hind

17 - 27 March 2023
17 - 27 November 2023

• **MELBOURNE • BENDIGO • BALLARAT • HALLS GAP •**
• THE MURRAY RIVER • CASTLEMAINE • DAYLESFORD • MALDON • MARYBOROUGH •
• GEELONG AND THE BELLARINE PENINSULAR • THE GRAMPIAN'S NATIONAL PARK •

Victorian Goldfields Railway

INTRODUCTION

The dawn of the railway age in Victoria was perfectly timed, coming hot on the heels of the greatest gold rush in Australia's history. The windfall from mining royalties was crucial in funding the construction of the country's first main line railways. These branched out in the 1850s and '60s to reach the 'Pot of Gold', the Murray River, at Echuca in 1864. Here, the riverboat trade was also booming and the coming of the railway added another spoke to this already busy hub. Our special short adventure celebrates this golden age of rail and river transport in the colony of Victoria. It culminates in a kind of re-enactment of the famous 'meeting of the whistles' at the Port of Echuca, where steam train and steamboat connected in a hail of whistles echoing over the town and river – the sound that once reminded one and all of the prosperity and enterprise of their great state.

Join us on a journey that showcases not only Victoria's culturally rich cities and towns, but also its unique natural beauty, iconic gold-rush history, sublime local gastronomy and character-filled railways. We begin our journey by experiencing the efficient, modern regional rail service before embarking on steam-powered transport that takes us back in time, and then on to the state's northern border. Here we experience the mighty Murray River aboard a quaint paddle steamer, where we enjoy a lunch cruise. Our next departure point is Bendigo staying in the grand old Shamrock Hotel and exploring the city at length. We visit Maryborough's grand station which is also a monument to another age and then settle into Ballarat for a few nights to explore the region, including a visit to Daylesford for a private charter of the charming DERM Railway and time at Sovereign Hill. Victoria's natural beauty is on show at the Grampians National Park and rides on Puffing Billy and Australia's premier rail restaurant the 'Q Train' cap off a mighty trip around The Garden State.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Heritage steam train on the Victorian Goldfields to Maldon
- Explore Bendigo and Ballarat museums on vintage trams
- Explore the must-see open-air museum of Sovereign Hill
- Private charter tour of the 'DERM' railcar on the Daylesford line
- Gold-rush history at Sovereign Hill, Ballarat, Bendigo and Echuca
- Visit Victoria's greatest natural wonder, the Grampians National Park
- Lunch on the lavish Q Train along the Bellarine Railway
- Enjoy comfortable coach connections and most meals included

MEET YOUR **TOUR LEADER**



Graeme Hind

Graeme has travelled Australia and the world extensively his entire life, whether it be by train, motorcycling through the Outback, Europe or North America, or through Africa in a 'worse for wear' Kombi van.

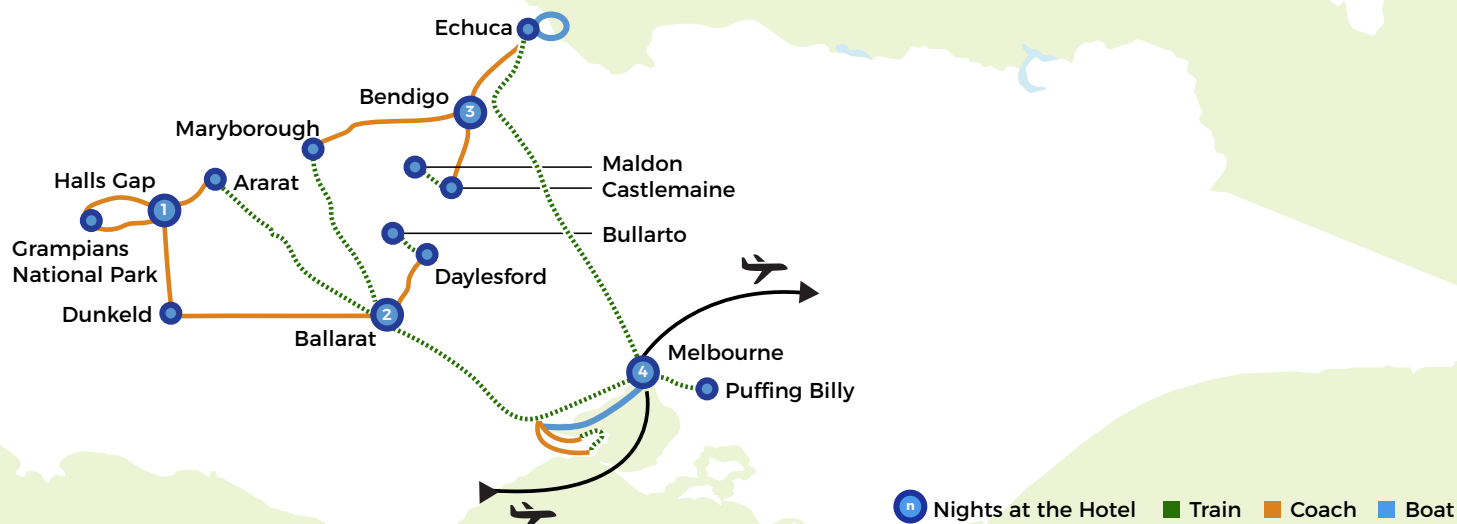
As a child growing up in Sydney, he witnessed the very last of the days of steam on the railways of NSW and thus began a fascination for trains and rail travel that continues today. He enthusiastically followed every boy's dream of becoming a steam engine driver, becoming involved in the railway preservation movement at an early age, and today he is a regular volunteer steam driver and trainer at a number of preserved railways in Victoria.

Graeme's professional life was in water resource engineering and operations, a field in which he is still involved, and this resulted in him residing in several rural locations in NSW and Tasmania. He has also lived in Canada and South Africa working for the railways there.

Q Train on the Bellarine Railway



TOUR MAP



WHY **TRAVEL WITH US**

The joy of travel is not confined to the destination. How you travel is a large and rich part of the experience. Railway Adventures offers a truly unique perspective on some of the world's most spectacular destinations, with the confidence that the journey will be just as magical and memorable as what is discovered at the end of the line.



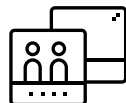
Unique
itineraries



Authentic local
experiences



Expert local
**guides and
operators**



Fully
escorted



Small
group sizes



Customer
satisfaction

SOME WAYS **YOU'LL TRAVEL**

The best train trips possible, private luxury coach for off-train travel, guided walking where suitable, and other appropriate and appealing options to make exploration easy.



PS Canberra



Victorian Goldfields Railway



Smart New V-Line Trains



Day 1 • Friday: ARRIVE MELBOURNE

Arrive in Victoria's vibrant capital and check-in to your hotel. In the evening, we'll enjoy a celebratory welcome dinner with the group a short walk from the Hotel.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (D)

Day 2 • Saturday: MELBOURNE - ECHUCA - BENDIGO

We depart Melbourne this morning, travelling by regional express train to Echuca. Watch the landscape whip past your window, passes Bendigo, Elmore and Rochester and arrives in time for us to board our Paddlesteamer for a gentle lunch while the steamer rolls down the Murray River from the historic Port of Echuca. In the afternoon we head back to the station for the afternoon journey to Bendigo. Here we'll meet our coach and transfer to the elegant and historic Shamrock Hotel, where you have free time before joining together for dinner in the hotel.

Overnight: Shamrock Hotel, Bendigo (B, L, D)

Day 3 • Sunday: BENDIGO - CASTLEMAINE - MALDON - BENDIGO

We depart Bendigo early this morning, travelling by coach to the quaint goldfield town of Castlemaine. On arrival visit Buda House, a classic, beautifully preserved Victoria Goldfields Villa set on 8 acres of tranquil gardens, here we take some time to explore before heading down to the railway station. We'll embark on a steam-hauled tour on the Victorian Goldfields Railway along the old branch line. Explore Maldon, an iconic gold rush town awarded the 'most intact townscape' by the National Trust, before heading back to Castlemaine in the mid-afternoon. Your first-class ticket allows you to ride in the wonderful parlour cars with access to the bar for some refreshments along the way if you so desire.

The rest of the afternoon and evening are free to explore the city at your leisure, with a Talking Tram ticket allowing you to hop on and hop off at will. We will get festive and have an early dinner at the popular Railway Hotel before heading back to Bendigo.

Overnight: Shamrock Hotel, Bendigo (B, D)

Day 4 • Monday: BENDIGO

This morning we begin our tour of the city of Bendigo, an iconic gold rush town rich with an intriguing history and unique character. You can explore the city's attractions on your own using a Talking Tram pass. Following this we'll resume our tour of the city on the old tram on a tour that showcases the main sights and attractions of Bendigo, finishing at the Central Deborah Gold Mine. Here you have the option to enjoy a surface tour. Alternately, don a hard-hat and grab a miners' lamp and descend 61m below the surface of Bendigo to walk in the footsteps of past miners on a guided tour.

The rest of the afternoon and evening are free to explore the city at your leisure, with your two-day Talking Tram ticket allowing you to hop on and hop off at will. Sights to explore include Bendigo Pottery, the Chinese Dragon Museum, the stunning Bendigo Art Gallery and the old Joss House.

Your evening is free to enjoy the many dining options around the city.

Overnight: Shamrock Hotel, Bendigo (B)

Day 5 • Tuesday: BENDIGO - MARYBOROUGH - BALLARAT

This morning you can enjoy a free morning and late check-out. You can explore the city's attractions on our own using your Talking Tram passes.

In the early afternoon we re-group and head down the road with our coach once again to the city of Maryborough where we take a break and explore the old railway station, one of Australia's grandest regional Victoria era buildings. Here, after a break, we board a local V-Line train for a short cross-country run to the fair city of Ballarat, our base for the next 2 nights.

We check into the wonderful Craig's Royal Hotel in the centre of the city and enjoy some free time to freshen up and relax before heading out to a local restaurant.

Overnight: Craig's Royal Hotel, Ballarat (B, D)

Day 6 • Wednesday: BALLARAT - DAYLESFORD - BALLARAT

Today we'll depart Ballarat by coach and travel to Daylesford, a little town in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. Here we'll take a privately chartered trip on the historic DERM Railway. After some time at leisure, we'll board the railway for the 1.5hr scenic round trip. Afterwards, we'll continue by coach for the return trip back to Ballarat.

On arrival, we head to Sovereign Hill.



Sovereign Hill is a living museum presenting the story of Ballarat as a gold rush boomtown. Gold was discovered here in 1851, triggering the greatest alluvial gold rush the world has ever known. The sleepy pastoral settlement of Ballarat grew rapidly into a fine provincial city built on the wealth derived from its gold. The Outdoor Museum enjoys international renown as a living museum featuring rare trades, working machinery, exhibits, and costumed interpreters.

The rest of the afternoon is at leisure for you to explore the city or perhaps take an optional side trip to the Eureka Centre, home to the Eureka Flag and museum dedicated to the story of the colonial days on the goldfields.

In the evening we regroup for dinner in the grand dining hall of our historic hotel.

Overnight: Craig's Royal Hotel, Ballarat (B, D)

Day 7 • Thursday: BALLARAT - HALL'S GAP

After a morning at leisure, we'll visit the Ballarat Tramway Museum for a look at their impressive collection of vintage trams. They were once the city's main form of public transport, and all of them are at least 100 years old. Enjoy a privately chartered run on the quaint Ballarat 4-wheel tram and learn of the days when they dominated the city. Back in town you have some free time to enjoy lunch on your own and visit the excellent regional gallery and gold exchange.

In the afternoon we'll travel by coach to Hall's Gap via Dunkeld to view the scenic southern half of the Grampian's National Park before settling into our accommodation for the evening. Dinner is hosted in the restaurant with views over the hills beyond.

Overnight: Comfort Inn Country Plaza, Halls Gap (B, D)

Day 8 • Friday: HALLS GAP - ARARAT - MELBOURNE

This morning take time to smell the roses of the Aussie bush in this dramatic setting before taking a special coach trip deep into the heart of the spectacular Grampians National Park. Known for its rugged sandstone mountains, dramatic cliffs and plummeting waterfalls, you'll see why it deserves its reputation as one of Victoria's greatest natural wonders. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before taking a short cross-country coach ride to Ararat where we'll board our train bound for Melbourne.

Arrive back in Melbourne in time to relax at the hotel before enjoying a banquet in the hotel's restaurant.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (B, L)

Day 9 • Saturday: MELBOURNE - PUFFING BILLY - MELBOURNE

After breakfast, we head back to Southern Cross Station to take a metro train to Belgrave, the departure point for the legendary Puffing Billy, Australia's most popular heritage railway situated in the foothills of the Dandenong Ranges. Originally built in the early 1900's as a low-cost 2'6" gauge line to service the local communities and timber industry, it was closed in stages in the 1950's before being saved by dedicated volunteers and rail fans who strived to restore the line and the rolling Stock. Since the 1960's it has been serving a huge role as one of Victoria's most popular tourist attractions. Here you'll get to experience a steam-hauled trip along the length of the character-filled narrow-gauge line. There will be opportunities to visit the new Lakeside Centre or Menzies Creek museum as part of your excursion ticket.

Return to Melbourne in the late afternoon for an evening at leisure.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (B, L)

Day 10 • Sunday: MELBOURNE - BELLARINE - MELBOURNE

This morning after a gentle start to the day we head down to the Docklands to catch a ferry to Queenscliff for our date with the Q Train.

Here we will be met by our hosts for the short transfer to Drysdale, our departure point for the Q Train, Australia's premier rail restaurant. The award-winning rolling restaurant travels along the historic Bellarine Railway between Drysdale and Queenscliff in restored carriages from the former Queensland Railways Sunlander train. The rural and coastal scenery rolls by while you dine on fresh local produce, a fitting finale to our journey across Victoria.

Overnight: The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne (B, L)

Day 11 • Monday: DEPARTURE

This morning your tour concludes after breakfast in the hotel.



WHAT'S **INCLUDED**

- 10 night's accommodation in comfortable, centrally located hotels
- Daily breakfast, four lunches and six dinners
- Drinks included with welcome and farewell dinners
- Luxury chartered coach connections throughout
- Comprehensive sightseeing with your tour leader as mentioned
- All excursions and entrance fees to attractions, as listed in the itinerary

WHAT WE **DON'T INCLUDE**

- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Meals and services not mentioned in the itinerary
- All other personal expenses, such as drinks, phone calls, laundry services, etc.
- Excursions listed as optional and extra in the itinerary

FITNESS **RATING**

Two 'Locos'

The most common grading for our tours. Two loco itineraries offer many activities that require a little extra fitness – walking on uneven ground, climbing hills to enter towns or historic sites, walks of 1-3 kilometres as well as getting on and off transport. You need to have good mobility and aerobic fitness and be able to manage your own luggage.



Sovereign Hill

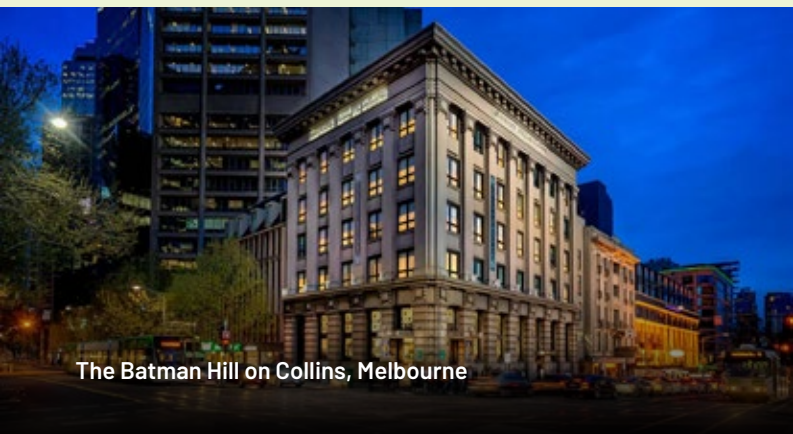


Musk Station on the Daylesford Branch Line

SOME PLACES **YOU'LL STAY**

Hand-picked hotels and resorts based on location, customer feedback, value and atmosphere.

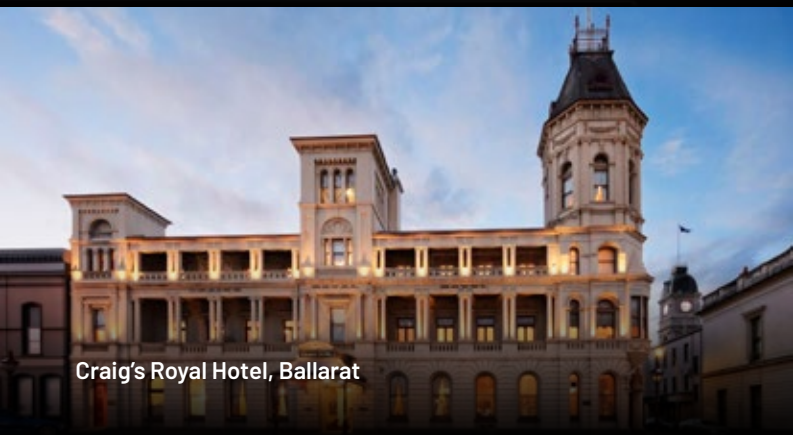
Please Note: Hotels of a similar standard may be substituted.



The Batman Hill on Collins, Melbourne



Hotel Shamrock, Bendigo



Craig's Royal Hotel, Ballarat



Comfort Inn Country Plaza, Halls Gap

PRICE

Per person twin share **\$5,885**
Single supplement **\$1,045**
Deposit (per person) **\$500 at time of booking**
Final payment due by **45 Days prior to departure**

Tour Code: 2303VIC (March) • 2311VIC (November)

SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

We have suggested flights for this itinerary depending on your departure point from Australia, any preferred stopovers en-route and/or your planned pre- and post-tour activities. We can also investigate your preferred airline and offer you a solution based on connection times and prices. Contact 1300 800 977 to discuss your options.

HOW TO BOOK

Download a booking form from our website and follow the easy steps to getting on board. Alternatively, contact us on 1300 800 977 or info@railwayadventures.com if you'd prefer a form be sent to you. Complete the form and submit it, along with your \$500 pp deposit to secure your place on the tour.

DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

We endeavour to have all the details of our tours correct at the time of printing. However, sometimes factors beyond our control may affect the final inclusions and prices. These factors may include, but not be limited to; significant fluctuations in currency exchange rates, individual hotel/restaurant decisions that may affect bookings; weather events forcing a change of itinerary; unexpected trackwork on rail lines, unexpected closure of site attractions and so forth. Therefore, items mentioned in the brochure such as quoted prices, hotels and inclusions are subject to change. If a change is imposed on us, we will endeavour to ensure the substitute is of the same quality that you've paid for.

TOUR PACE / LEVEL OF FITNESS:

Our itineraries are designed to make the most of each destination, so a reasonable amount of activity is built into most days, which is why we call them adventures. Our philosophy is to offer you the best experience possible, while leaving you, our guest, the flexibility to pace yourself and choose how much or how little you want to do. Each Railway Adventures tour incorporates periods of free time for your own exploration and relaxation.

While you don't need to be a 'gym junky', a reasonable level of fitness is required for most of our tours. The ability to manage your own luggage, get on and off all manner of trains and coaches, walk for extended periods, stand comfortably, and climb steps and stairs will ensure you get the maximum enjoyment from your adventure.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to assisting with flight suggestions and bookings, we can also give you some ideas of what you could do before and after your Railway Adventure.

We can also organise your all-important Travel Insurance for you. Call our office on 1300 800 977 if you would like to discuss options.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For more information on factors such as travel insurance requirements, fitness levels, fees and charges, tour cancellations, payment schedules and so on, please refer to our Terms and Conditions, which accompany the booking form. They can also be found on our website.

Puffing Billy



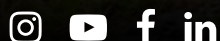
**RAILWAY
ADVENTURES**

THE RAILWAY ADVENTURES **STORY**

Railway Adventures was launched in 2012 by well-known Australian TV personality and self-confessed rail fan, Scott McGregor. A lifelong passion for travel has taken Scott to scores of countries and his preference for rail has seen him exploring many of the world's great train journeys, confirming his belief that the most relaxing, romantic and engaging way to see a country is by rail. He even has his own life-sized, fully-restored opulent train accommodation atop the Great Dividing Range near Mudgee, offering guests a rare and special bush retreat experience. You can obtain more information about this unique guest house at WWW.STAYINATRIN.COM

Since 2012 Railway Adventures has thrilled and delighted more than 1500 travellers on over 120 tours from Sweden to Sri Lanka, Tasmania to Transylvania, Britain to Burma, Venice to Vietnam and all manner of shorter adventures in our own wonderful country. Scott's numerous rail-themed TV documentaries, his ongoing involvement in rail heritage and his extensive connections with private train owners around the world, guarantee that every Railway Adventures tour is exclusive, entertaining and authentic. 15 November 2022.

1300 800 977
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