

ASHET/RAHS study tour to the Darling Downs 2010

Call for Expressions of Interest



Following the very successful study tour to the NSW Outback in August 2009, a 13-day study tour to the Darling Downs is now proposed. It will depart on 16 August 2010. The tour will explore the distinctive history and heritage of this vast plateau on the western slopes of the Great Dividing Range in southern Queensland. 'The Downs' was named after Ralph Darling, then Governor of NSW, by Alan Cunningham who was a botanist and one of the first Europeans to explore the region, in 1827.

A diverse array of experiences will be included such as inspections of notable buildings and structures; visits to museums, galleries, lookouts and heritage centres; guided walks through parks, gardens, wetlands, industrial sites, woolsheds, saleyards; a great opportunity to view natural and cultural heritage of the region. Tour members will be encouraged to mix and share experiences as they explore common interests in history and heritage. Six of the heritage interpretation centres included in the tour have each received over \$1 million in recent funding from the Queensland and Federal Governments and these are now amongst the leading regional heritage centres in Australia. The tour includes a full-day visit to the 34th Australian Heritage Festival held annually at Jondaryan Woolshed & Station Village. The tour also coincides with the early spring wildflowering period across the Darling Downs and with the early preparation of garden displays in Toowoomba for the annual Carnival of Flowers.

History and heritage themes of special interest in the Darling Downs include its landscapes, rivers, flora and fauna; indigenous cultures; exploration & settlement by Europeans; parks and reserves; pastoral & farming industries; oil & gas industries; architecture and transport systems; and recent dramatic growth in irrigated cotton farming, coal mining, and tourism. Each tour member will receive a set of readings which provide some historical context and selected details about heritage aspects of these themes.

The tour will have a pace and travel distances similar to those of the 2009 tour to the NSW Outback with stays of 2 nights in each Goondiwindi and Roma, and 5 nights in Toowoomba. While based in Toowoomba there will be day trips to the Railway Workshop Museum at Ipswich, Highfields Pioneer Village and several local villages of note. The Tour Leader will be Rob Renew (who was previously Principal Curator, Science & Industry at the Powerhouse Museum) and the Tour Manager will be Mari Metzke.

Transport: Tour members will travel in a 5-star 44-seat coach with reclining armchair seats, sound system with DVD/CD and PA, air-conditioning, storage compartments for luggage, and a toilet.

Accommodation: This will be of 3.5 star standard and always centrally located allowing tour members to explore the fascinating rural towns and cities of the Downs on foot during their 'free time'.

Estimated Cost: Tour fees for the 13 day tour are about \$1940 per person (sharing twin or double rooms) and about \$2420 per person in single rooms. These fees include 12 nights accommodation in 3.5-star motels, all breakfasts, two dinners, six lunches, ten morning or afternoon teas; and fees for group visits to museums, site tours and entry into the Australian Heritage Festival at Jondaryan.

Expressions of Interest: If you are interested in joining the tour, please email us on outreach@rahs.org.au with your contact details (name, phone, and preferred email) and likely accommodation needs (double, twin share, or single). Expressions of interest close on **Friday 30 April**. If you have questions, please call Mari on 9247 8001 or Ian Arthur on 9958 8397.

