

## Day 22: Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2012

### Flight 3: Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June '12 - Christchurch to Sydney

### Flight 4: Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June '12 - Sydney to Brisbane

The wind gusts woke both of us this morning as it rocked the motorhome but we didn't mind, today we have a few more things to do to get the motorhome ready to return to Kea. We have nearly depilated all of our supplies, the remaining food gets dumped, coffee and sugar stay in the motorhome and the couple of plastic containers can stay as well.

Having finished breakfast the last cleanup begins including the last visit to the dump station before we head for the petrol station to return the motorhome full of diesel. The trusty Kea road map and Tom Tom leads us to Kea where the motorhome is checked over, paperwork completed, survey form filled in, one last signature and the driver drops us off at the airport with hours to spare, all told we travelled 2,868Km with the motorhome never missing a beat.



At first we thought we were going to have fly JetSquash as we couldn't see any QANTAS check in facilities, but were we relieved to see them set up in one area. The previous day we had completed the online check in and the only seats they would allow us to choose were on either sides of the aisle. The lady behind the counter asked us if we wanted to change to sit together and have a window seat, this we accepted gratefully. We now have our boarding passes right through to Brisbane having to change from international to domestic when we arrive in Sydney.



Now the long wait, it was just after 10am, we can't go through to the international section until 11:25am so here we sit in the shared domestic and international eating and shopping area hence the update in the diary. The free WiFi connection only allows you to surf websites associated with Christchurch airport, but at least it's something to play around with. One thing I don't understand is why airports don't have power outlets in convenient locations; surely this is a public service.

Finally the doors to customs and the international departures hall open right on 11:25am and we are the first to head through the scanner and get customs clearance, still 1 hour 15 minutes before boarding, this must be a record for being early, but that's how I like it. Passing through Duty Free we pick up two bottles of brandy and two bottles of Scotch that should keep us going for a while.

The Coffee Club is a welcome site and we get rid of the rest of our New Zealand currency buying coffee, something to eat with the remainder going toward Ronald McDonald House.



Sitting here having our coffee we can see the dark clouds rolling in over the snow capped mountain ranges in the distance, they have predicted storms and heavy rain for tonight but unless it gets colder, I think it will rain on the ski fields instead of snow.



Taking our place in the 737-800 in the second last row of three seats our holiday in New Zealand was quickly drawing to a close and soon all we would have are memories, photos and this diary. As we took off we had no idea of the turbulence we were heading into. Remember those storm clouds I was telling about rolling over the mountain ranges; well our pilot came on the intercom to tell us we were heading into 150 knot winds and to expect some turbulence.

As soon we were in the middle of it with the plane being tossed around by the winds as the aircraft climbed as quick and as steep as it could to get above the turbulence. The wings certainly had what appeared to be maximum movement before we broke through the clouds and turbulence into brilliant sunshine. The turbulence wasn't over completely with several announcements even telling the cabin crew to be seated and put on their seat belts. At one stage we heard the clatter and crash of trays sliding out of their cabinets with drink cans scattered across the floor.

With Robyn sitting next to the window and a spare seat next to me, I moved to the aisle seat to give us a little more room to read, eat our meal, snooze and spread out. This aircraft didn't have the entertainment screen in the seat in front of us, just a tiny little screen that dropped down from under the baggage compartment so it was pointless watching the movie 'Salmon fishing in the Yemen' and besides, I had watched it on the way to Auckland.



Our last look at the South Island as we head out of Christchurch before crossing the ditch to Australia (above). Our first look at Australia as we fly into Sydney airport.





As we drew close to Sydney we spotted the land mass, then the suburbs, the city centre, the beaches, Kurnell and the heads as we lined up to land from the south then touchdown and we are back in Australia. As we passed through immigration and baggage claim we were surprised to see no one in customs just a couple of people to collect our entry cards and even though Robyn had ticked she had food, the lady simply said gate 8 and we walked out into the hall.

Okay, the cabin crew said follow the signs to QANTAS domestic flight transfers, pass through the scanner where Robyn was once again picked out for a test on gun powder residue, on to the shuttle bus, across to the domestic terminal, up the escalator, walk all the way to terminal 11 with 45 minutes spare before boarding our domestic flight to Brisbane. David had sent a text to see if we were back and the flight to Brisbane would be on time and after ringing him we settled on a time to be picked up of around 7pm.

The flight to Brisbane was full, chockers with every available seat taken by QANTAS cabin crew heading to Brisbane. We were seated in row 4 just behind the business class with more leg room than I have ever had on any flight other than when I was seated in the exit row on the Sydney to Montreal many years ago. We felt like we were in business class but instead of three seats, they only have two seats per row on each side of the aircraft.

Once again there was only a small drop down screen but given the short flight I didn't even pick up the headset, just read the newspaper and enjoyed the savoury snack which incidentally was produced in Jindabyne and tasted terrific.

The sunset to the west was magnificent, one we hadn't seen throughout our New Zealand holiday and as darkness fell we were starting our descent over the Gold Coast into Brisbane airport touching down at 6:35pm and our holiday was over.

The people drop off and pick up area at Brisbane domestic terminal is a disgrace, totally disorganised with cars parked here there and everywhere, some staying stationary more than the 2 minutes permitted, cars pulling out, cars squeezing in, an absolute joke.

Anyone can see that if they had four lanes with the left lane to drop off passengers, the far right lane to pick up passengers and the two centre lanes to keep traffic moving as they go round if their passengers were not ready the operation would run smoothly, well as smoothly as the idiot drivers behind the wheel would permit.

David pulled up in the Maxima having to go round once, baggage placed in the boot and back seat, in the car and home. It felt funny sitting so low in the car after sitting up high in the motorhome, also we were restricted to 90Kmph in New Zealand and here we were reaching the 100 and then 110Kmph in the designated speed zones.

We arrived home at around 8:30pm, had some tea and then for some unknown reason we sat up until 12:30am watching MasterChef as it went through the last series of episodes bring us up to date for Sunday night.