



AUSTRALIAN JOURNEY OF

**Daniel, Libby, Joshua, Bethany, Caleb and
Ruben Simkins**

Dear Family and Friends,

Sorry it's been a few months since we've last written. When you work all day on a computer it can be hard to motivate yourself to do yet another task on a screen!

At the time of the last newsletter a cyclone was barrelling towards us. Everyone relaxed after the cyclone caused only minimal damage, but this was then followed by the worst flooding every recorded. The region was devastated, with many people losing their houses and possessions. Fortunately, our house was not impacted, but Caleb's placement was cancelled because the road north was impassable due to landslides. Even today, months later, the river landscape looks very post-apocalyptic. We spent a few days not really going anywhere - it was very reminiscence of the Covid lockdown!



A few weeks later it was time for **Joshua** to set off for his new life in Mackay. It's about 10 hours south of here, which means you literally get in the car and drive on the same road for 10 hours. We visited him over Easter, and Ruben and I thought we would amuse ourselves by playing a game of 'spot interesting things' on the drive. It was not a successful game; we saw a blue tree, a large mango, a pink rock and (getting a little desperate) included a sheep! Which is to say that Australia is a huge country and there are long stretches with nothing but a few trees and scrubby grassland! Joshua has settled well into life in Mackay. He is enjoying his job, is making friends and has found a church. He will probably only stay there for the two years of his graduate program which may mean this will be the closest he will ever live to us!

That left us with five in the house for a few more weeks until it was time for **Caleb** to go back to uni. This meant another drive south to Townsville (only five hours!) to drop him off and all his gear. Same road, same landscape, same blue tree! Now in his second year, Caleb was happy to be returning to uni, so it was easy to drop him off. Having said that, the joy of seeing all his friends again was quickly replaced a week later when Caleb remembered how intense his course is and how much study is involved. (For the record I did warn him!) Please pray for him - for stamina for study, and wisdom on the best way to learn all the anatomy and physiology involved.

We are again a household of four people, slightly quieter and with much lower food bills. **Bethany** has a new job working in after school care. She wanted more opportunity working with children, as her degree only involves a few weeks a year actually in a school. (Who organises these degrees?!) She is in her third year with one more to go. Pray for her as she juggles uni and work, that she won't get overwhelmed. **Ruben** has softened the blow of his brothers being away by playing Minecraft with Joshua online. (Loop holes for more screen time are endless; this is 'spending time with his brother'!) He is having a great year at school, with a fantastic teacher who he gets on with really well.

My job is going well. The courses I am writing mean I am learning more about aircraft than I ever wanted to know! Probably shouldn't have chosen an aviation charity to work for! Daniel has found a better work-life balance this year and, although he doesn't always have the energy levels he would like, he is doing fine and feeling much better than this time last year.



This is the day the Lord has made: We will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118 v 24

Thinking about journeys and scenery, I read this the other day and was challenged by it, I hope you will be too!

"Trust Me at all times, and stop to look at the scenery along the way. For I AM with you always. I want you to enjoy My Presence and fellowship with Me as I commune with you along the way. Stop looking beyond this moment. For as you plan ahead and push ahead, you may forget that I have created this day for you to rejoice in. Be filled with thanksgiving for what you now have and what you now see. Recognize that I Am with you in this sojourn, and the rush to move forward is ignoring the pleasures of My presence this day. Feast on the manna for today, and let Me guide you continually. Fellowship with Me now and enjoy the journey. - *Slight paraphrase from 'Enjoy the Journey' written by June Sheltroun Reinke.*

Even on the difficult days I don't want to be in such a rush to get through them, that I miss what God has for me.

Thank you for your continued prayer and support. Love to you all.

Daniel, Libby, Joshua, Bethany, Caleb and Ruben

