

Bus Trip to Roma Street Parklands and City Botanical Gardens Brisbane.

A big thank you to Stephen Stocker, Diana Harden for organising our trip to the Roma Street Parklands and City Botanical Gardens and to everyone who joined us!

With the Pacific Highway roadworks finally finished, the drive up to Brisbane was smooth sailing — barely any traffic at all. The bus was full of chatter and laughter; these trips are always such a lovely way to relax and really get to know one another.

When we arrived, we kicked things off with a quick cuppa before setting out on a guided walk through the parklands. Our guides shared some fascinating history: the site was once railway yards and Brisbane's main produce markets from 1874 right up until 1991, when the yards moved to Acacia Ridge. There were plenty of ideas for what to do with the space — even a football stadium at one point — but thanks to Colin Campbell¹ and others, it was turned into a stunning garden instead. The park officially opened in April 2001 and is now recognised as one of the largest tropical gardens in any city centre. It's home to over 1,800 plant species, with more than 100,000 shrubs, 1,200 mature trees, and 250 ferns planted when it first opened.



The upper parkland includes the old Albert Park, dating back to the 1870s, which later evolved into Brisbane's first subtropical-style urban gardens in the 1960s under



Harry Oakman's design. We also learned about the clever 400,000-litre water tank hidden beneath the Celebration Lawn — it collects stormwater and keeps almost all of the park's irrigation needs covered. We spent the morning wandering at an easy pace, taking in the beautiful scenery. The Spectacle Garden in Colin Campbell Place was an absolute explosion of colour, with more than 15,000 annuals and ferns. The winding paths here symbolise the Rainbow Serpent, and we spotted plenty of Eastern Water Dragons basking in the sun. There were also some wonderful artworks tucked among the greenery, created by 16 local artists.

Lunch was a real treat: light sandwiches and a selection of delicious little cakes at The Garden Room café — the perfect spot to relax and refuel.

¹ As those who love Gardening Australia would know Colin Campbell was a longtime presenter and a much-loved Queenslander so it seems only fitting that the central part of the garden be named in his honour.



Afterwards, we headed over to the old Brisbane Botanic Gardens. Some of us tried to catch an exhibition at the William Robinson Gallery (we were a day early, unfortunately!) but enjoyed admiring the beautiful old Queensland buildings on the walk there.

The rest of the group took their time exploring the shady park paths and strolled along the peaceful mangrove walk beside the Brisbane River.



All in all, it was a wonderful day out — great company, plenty of laughs, and some truly gorgeous sights.