



WESTERN SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL  
(Nancy-Bird Walton) AIRPORT  
EXPERIENCE CENTRE  
with BBQ Lunch at Warragamba Dam

THURSDAY 27 MAY 2021



Departure from Penshurst was at 8.30 am. It was a stunning day, and the morning after the super moon and eclipse that Sydney's population had enjoyed so much. 32 of us on board, so almost filling the 36-seater McDermott coach with the wonderful Malcolm driving. We joined the M5 at Beverly Hills, then the M7 which was a bit of a carpark. We turned off onto Cowpasture Road, then Elizabeth Drive and found ourselves at our morning tea spot, Western Sydney Parklands, about 45 minutes later. We'd not visited here previously, so it took time to find a suitable table with the very necessary toilets nearby. As usual, Elizabeth excelled herself with great cookies and slices.

Information taken from various websites states: The park is huge, 5,280-hectares, stretching for 27 km over three local government areas and is the largest urban parkland in Australia. Known as "Sydney's Biggest Backyard", it has extensive walking and cycling paths, picnic shelters and playgrounds, and is home to major events and tourist attractions such as the new Sydney Zoo. It also features a number of urban farms, community and business facilities. Under the 2030 Plan of Management, the Parklands will remain mostly bushland (40%), with 30% set aside for recreation and tourism facilities and 5% designated for urban farming.

Time to head to Badgery's Creek and we'd arrived at the Experience Centre by 10.15, to be met by a guide who ensured that each of us did the Covid check-in, before directing us to the large room in the centre of what is not a large building. Here, we watched a video (which repeated every few minutes), then were joined by a second guide and shown around the interactive "pods". Yes, it was interesting, but what stole the show was the activity outside the centre, the building of the airport, the first runway @ 3.7 km due to open in 2026. It was a real hive of activity - we lost count of the vehicles and machinery tearing around the site, all intent on being somewhere/doing something at just the right time! The management of the construction, and of those working there, must be a logistical nightmare. According to the airport's brochure, 50% of total earthworks will be completed and construction will commence on the terminal by the end of 2021. Interestingly, the land area is twice the size of Kingsford Smith Airport, but there will be just the one runway initially with the second (parallel and also 3.7 km) to be completed by 2065! We won't get to see that one!

It was fantastic to watch and difficult to tear ourselves away, but lunch was calling. However, first Mal wanted to take us on a lap of the airport property which took around 15 mins, before heading out to the dam, through the pretty villages of Wallacia and Warragamba. We'd not been here for lunch in years, so Liz sought help from staff in finding the particular BBQ area that she was looking for. Needless to say, it hadn't changed a bit and, being mid-week and quiet, most of the site was free. The sausages were ably cooked by Wal and Ron, with Charlie and Ted doing a great job with the onions. The ladies were madly buttering bread rolls (which were to die for) and a delicious coleslaw was made by Liz. Most of us got stuck into the surprisingly good red and white cask wine, but there was orange juice and water, plus tea/coffee and slice to finish.

After a couple of hours here and then time spent at the Warragamba Dam Visitor Centre (the dam approx. 97% full), it was time to head home, travelling much the same roads as the trip out. Lucky Seat prizes were won by Lyn P and Coral, and we'd returned to Penshurst by just after 4 pm. A really relaxing and pleasant time, with a big thank you to Mal, to Liz and to all those members who assisted on the day.