



MACLEAY VALLEY TRAVEL PTY LTD
WE TRY HARDER TO FIND YOU THE BEST TRAVEL DEAL

CALL US TOLL FREE 1800 810 809
Email: info@macleayvalleytravel.com

AN UPDATE FROM MACLEAY VALLEY TRAVEL



About now, we would normally be sending out one of our usual newsletters, promoting upcoming tours, but this letter is rather different. It's more of an update to tell our customers where we are, what we're doing and what our plans for tours look like for the second half of 2020 and beyond.

So far 2020 has been a very difficult year in the travel business. It can be challenging having to deal with the daily effects of global problems. But the good news is Macleay Valley Travel is still here, not exactly thriving but certainly surviving.

We have made the decision not to promote our full range of tours for the remainder of 2020. Given the level of uncertainty and the restrictions on international travel, we cannot run tours that will likely have few passengers or no passengers at all. Therefore, we have decided to be very selective about the tours we offer for the remainder of 2020. We only intend to market the tours that we have a high level of confidence will go ahead. At this

point in time we are unsure of which tours will run, so we're not marketing any.

For the most part, we're going to sit on the sidelines to see what eventuates in the coming weeks and months. In the meantime, we will revert to being a normal travel agency, arranging trips, flights and accommodation for customers as they request them.

After a number of very busy years, our office will be taking advantage of the rare luxury of a quieter time to review MVT's operations and to make changes to freshen up the list of tours we provide.

Hopefully, our next newsletter will be more like the usual ones, full of prospects for new and exciting adventures for our customers. After however long a period of not travelling, we think that many of you will have itchy feet to get going again and we hope that you will choose to travel with us once more.

In the meantime we thought we would give you more information on who we are and where we've come from....



It all started in 1992, when Alan Davies purchased a struggling travel agency in Kempsey on the Mid North Coast of New South Wales. Alan had the idea of offering low priced but good value escorted overseas tours. He ran his first tour in 1993 to Thailand, with five passengers.

In the year 2000, Alan was running 30 tours a year with 500 passengers in total. By 2007, this grew to 104 tours with more than 2,100 passengers.

During the early years, the main tour destinations were Thailand and Vietnam. At its height, there were up to 100 passengers travelling to Thailand with MVT on the same day. In 2005, there were 10 Vietnam Overland tours with more than 300 passengers in total. Over the years MVT has taken 5000 passengers to Thailand and 7000 passengers to Vietnam.

The range of tours rapidly expanded from this base and soon covered most parts of the world.

In July 2011, Alan's son Bryn took over the business and has been running it since then. Alan kept working part-time until his retirement in 2019. Alan now has time on his hands to enjoy travelling on the tours that he has helped create.

In a normal year, MVT runs about 90 tours. Sadly this number won't be achieved in 2020, but we are eager to get things back to normal as soon as the situation permits.

Over the years we have developed what might be considered our 'classic' tours. By this we

mean tours which have been consistently popular. These include Spain, Portugal & Morocco, Thailand & the Chiang Mai Floral Festival, British Isles with the Chelsea Flower Show, South Africa, Japan Cherry Blossoms, Western Canada & Alaska and Vietnam Explorer.

In recent years MVT has introduced a selection of new tours, some of which have become permanent additions to our tour schedule. Examples include Russian Waterways, China & the Harbin Ice Festival, Japan Autumn Leaves, Balkans & the Dalmatian Coast, Singapore, Turkey, Egypt and Sri Lanka, which is now one of our most popular tours.

Other destinations less frequently visited include Central Asia, Mongolia, Mexico & Cuba, Caucasus and East Africa. We are always open to any new ideas or places of interest that appeal to you. All you need to do is pick up the phone and we would be happy to hear your thoughts. In 2021, we intend to run some Australian tours so you can see a bit more of our own backyard.

The next time you are looking at our website you may wish to check out our revamped 'Testimonials' page. A common request over the years was to make the feedback form available in a digital format so it can be completed online. This can now be found on our website.

MVT has many loyal customers, some of whom have been travelling with us for many years. At last count, 784 customers have been on 5 or more tours. Of this number, 137 customers have been on 10 or more tours. Just in case you are curious, the current record for the highest number of tours travelled is 31.

Tour Escort Snapshot

Stephen McInerney

When did you start escorting tours with MVT?

My first tour was the Java & Bali Tour in 2014.

How many countries have you travelled to?

As a Tour Escort I have completed 20 tours encapsulating numerous countries. Privately, I have travelled throughout Europe, Asia/Pacific and the Middle East.



Is there still anywhere left on your bucket list?

I would love to visit Turkey and Eastern Europe, but I can always go back time and time again to Central Asia and Vietnam to visit the many beautiful people who I now call friends. I would also love to undertake a tour of the European battlefields of the First World War.

Which is your favourite destination?

I have two favourites, Central Asia and Vietnam, both hold a special place in my heart.

What are you doing to occupy your time during the partial lockdown?

Like everybody else I am catching up on all those little jobs around the house that I have been putting off for years. I am enjoying quality time with my beautiful 3 year old grandson,

Conor, who is having some fun with his Poppy.

It has also given me time to get back into some dedicated exercise, I am already up to about 120kms per week on the road bike, 2 x 45 minute sessions on the indoor trainer and then my daily 5km walks with my dog, Arnie.

Until overseas travel recommences I am looking forward to some travel within Australia with my wife Paula, in our Nissan Patrol towing our Ultimate off-road camper.



Tour Escort Snapshot

Janine Chock

When did you start escorting tours with MVT?

My first adventure as MVT tour escort was the Inside Vietnam Tour August 2017.

How many countries have you travelled to?

I have visited 14 countries and I am hoping I can add to my list in the near future.

Is there still anywhere left on your bucket list?

Absolutely!! Where do I start??? South Africa, Cambodia, Spain, Portugal & Morocco, India, Japan, Scandinavia, etc...

Which is your favourite destination?

Wow... this is a hard choice!! Probably Sri Lanka closely followed by Thailand..

What are you doing to occupy your time during the partial lockdown?

During our lockdown period I have invested many hours in my garden. I have also established myself a goal to walk everyday... aiming for at least 5km per day.. so far so good!!!

Tour Escort Snapshot

Stephen Shields

When did you start escorting tours with MVT?

I did my first tour with MVT to Vietnam on the Vietnam Explorer Tour 26 July 2013.

How many countries have you travelled to?

My best estimate is that I have visited 40 countries during my time with MVT. I have been to several countries multiple times including Vietnam, Japan, USA, Canada, India and Sri Lanka. During this time I have completed 38 tours with MVT.

Is there still anywhere left on your bucket list?

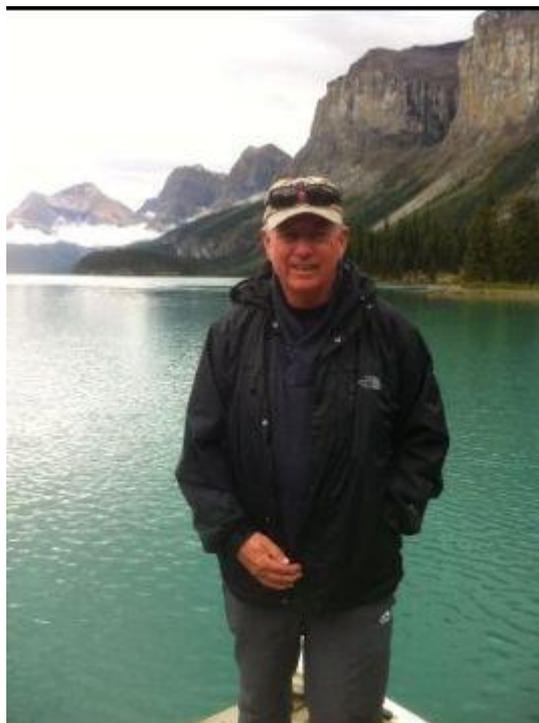
The Balkans and the Dalmatian Coast is still on my list as well as South America and Cuba.

Which is your favourite destination?

That is such a hard question and one that I am asked very often. Every destination I have toured has had so many highlights that I could easily say every tour has been my favourite. However, I often reminisce of the British Isles particularly Scotland and Ireland. So much natural beauty. I also reminisce of the Trans America tours I have completed and also the beauty of Canada.

What are you doing to occupy your time during the partial lockdown?

I have been involved with Community Radio Station 2WAY FM in the Hastings Valley for 25 years presenting music of the 50's, 60's and 70's. I have increased my participation in that organisation whilst we are 'grounded' including a week day local sports report. I have had a few games of golf with mates and enjoyed a walk on Shelly Beach, Port Macquarie and a swim every morning to keep fit.



Tour Escort Snapshot

Sheila Stephenson

When did you start escorting tours with MVT?

My first tour as tour escort was to Cuba in 2007.

How many countries have you travelled to?

65 countries with MVT plus 25 independently.

Is there still anywhere left on your bucket list?

There's always more! Egypt and East Africa as well as Iceland. Ethiopia and Bhutan too!

Which is your favourite destination?

Always a difficult question. Usually it is where I am today, wherever that may be, but Sri Lanka and Turkey are particularly stunning and so interesting.

What are you doing to occupy your time during the partial lockdown?

My first reaction to the partial lockdown was to make the long list of things I planned to do. Paint the ceiling, declutter the house, shred the old paperwork etc but I have done none of those things!

It is so peaceful here in the beautiful Tweed Valley. I have been taking long walks and enjoying long phone calls with friends and family. Best of all is my wild subtropical garden.

Tour Escort Snapshot

Bruce Macmeechan

When did you start escorting tours with MVT?

My first trip with Macleay Valley Travel was Scandinavia & The Arctic Circle with China stopover in August 2005.

How many countries have you travelled to?

I have travelled to 59 countries

Is there still anywhere left on your bucket list?

I would like to explore more of the Eastern Bloc countries.

Which is your favourite destination?

I have travelled to Vietnam on many occasions and it goes down as my favourite country which is also helped by the great setup and guides we have there.

What are you doing to occupy your time during the partial lock down?

It has been good to have time at home where I have been catching up with general repairs, painting and gardening. There is always something to do.





Tour Escort Snapshot

Pauline Lee

When did you start escorting tours with MVT?

I commenced tour escorting for MVT in October 2010, with my first tour being to Vietnam.

How many countries have you travelled to?

53 countries, including 28 tours with MVT.

Is there still anywhere left on your bucket list?

Yes! Iceland, Caucasus & the Black Sea, India & Great Britain. At some stage I would like to visit Malta, Sardinia and Crete. There are so many countries I would like to revisit.

Which is your favourite destination?

I am often asked by clients as to what is my favourite destination. How do you answer that by specifying one country? I consider each tour an adventure and I am never disappointed with the hidden gems that each country exposes. I have an obsession for ancient history as well as the natural scenic beauty which has fuelled an addiction to travelling, the more I see the more I want to keep exploring.

I love that the clients who travel with MVT also have that desire to experience life outside of our own country and embrace the cultural differences that they are travelling in. I have a great deal of respect for the guides who I have worked with as they provide the cohesive backbone for the tours.

What are you doing to occupy your time during the partial lockdown?

Isolation has given me time to finish my photo books of the tours that I have escorted. I still work full time and plan to retire from my full time work early next year, hoping that I can devote more time to travel. I have taken advantage of the isolation period to catch up with household chores, gardening and researching new adventures. Once the isolation laws are relaxed I am looking forward to spending time with our grandchildren.

Over the last ten years it has been a pleasure to represent MVT and it is always wonderful to hear the clients responses regarding the high level of service provided by MVT within the travel industry.

Everything is possible! Think positive and I hope to see some of you on your next travel adventure.