



**F**ROM European royalty to a straight Swedish family, the friendly and knowledgeable team at the proudly gay-owned Planetdwellers are the perfect choice to organise the ideal holiday for anybody and everybody.

Started almost 10 years ago by Mario Paez and Barry Warner, the travel and tour company has gone from strength to strength and has already booked travel for and shown off the wonders of LGBTI Australia to more than 10,000 people.

Originally the pair set up the business to show off the gay hotspots and famous sites everyone visits Sydney for, but has since grown to include an impressive number of tours all over the country.

They're even setting their sights on expanding to more international trips after their successful Peru and Galapagos tour in 2015. One of the plans on the horizon is gay Disney family trips.

"All of our clients get to witness first hand how

much history is between the two of us and also what we have experienced in gay Sydney, Oxford Street and the Australian Gaybourhoods," Mario says.

"It's about travellers meeting locals and friends of ours to make them feel like they are not just on holidays, but actually being a local."

One of the first customers the company had was a gay man who lived in a country where being himself was illegal.

Visiting Brisbane for a work conference, the man organised with the Planetdwellers team to come to Sydney for a three-day tour.

"We will always remember it," Mario says.

"He loved the feeling of being free, being able to experience beautiful Sydney and being able to stay in a gay village."

It was also a learning experience for the team, as the man didn't want to be in any photos in fear his family would have discovered them.

Some other clients of the Planetdwellers crew include European royalty on a tour of Tasmania, a famous Argentinian actor, television presenters - and even a straight family from Sweden visiting for Mardi

Gras in 2014.

"One of the most amazing highlights was when Barry helped organise a marriage proposal on top of Sydney Harbour Bridge for one of our guests from Seattle," Mario says.

"Sydney Bridge Climb even released a promotional video about it last year."

The Planetdwellers team has also played a huge role in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras over the past six years, with their day tours selling out and packages being snapped up.

"We loved taking over the Mardi Gras sunset cruise last year and are super excited to be running it again this year with DJ Matt Effect and our fabulous MC Felicity Frockaccino," Barry says.

The team has also just set up a new Oxford St shopfront that is set to open later this month.

"It will be our dream shop where it will always be fun to pop in to book your next holiday, to book one of our tours, to work together on planning your special event and hopefully, some day soon, to plan your same-sex wedding in Australia," Mario says. \*





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