



*Sunset at the Grand Canyon*

So much has been packed into 2019, for each of us individually and together as a family.

2019 for Chloe has been all about full-time school, as she has made it through a whole year of 5 days a week going to Kindergarten (and holiday club part-time in the holidays - thanks Aunty Kylie for looking after her so well!). Her reading and writing has blossomed massively, and she has started learning Japanese too. Her swimming has come on by leaps and bounds. She loves to draw, has joined cartoon club and dance club at school, and she has also kept up the ballet (and absolutely loved performing in the dance school show in November). She is still the sociable bundle she always has been, but learning to navigate school friendships has been a new challenge, and we are very grateful that she still has her out-of-school friends tied closely into her life. She has so many people held tight and deep in her heart, and has really appreciated the family dinners we instigated into Sunday afternoons as a special time to just be the four of us.

Lucy has carried on at daycare this year, and her personality continues to shine through ever more strongly. She's a bundle of sunshine, mischief and positivity, with an excellent ability to pout when she's told 'no' (and do it anyway); always very clear on what she wants. She is full of love for life and for people, and gives the best hugs to her friends and family; I think hugging people is one of her current life missions. She has loved taking part in Blueberries dance classes this year, and even more loved starting swimming lessons halfway through the year, the two classes are the highlights of her week. Just turned 4, she is so looking forward to starting pre-school in February 2020, along with 'big-girl ballet'.

Pete's job continues to keep him busy and challenged, with the current focus on an office move over Christmas 2019. He has travelled to Sydney several times this year too. In his spare time he is still reviewing games for a couple of different websites, has served as treasurer for the football club board alongside playing a season with the Masters team, and of course continues to face the challenges of parenting two small, growing children head on. He is the biggest support to our family, always happy to take on whatever is needed whether it's grocery shopping, an extra bedtime, or driving a new bed home for Chloe at the end of a long day working out of the Sydney office! He also went down to help on the Enforcer team at PAXAUS in October (and came home one brand new XBOX better off), and had a weekend away snowboarding at the start of the winter season in June. I think, if asked, he'd simply smile at you and comment that "life rolls on".

And finally Cat continues to muddle through work and parenting, somehow. The work team has changed around her again several times this year, with new leadership coming in, old team members moving on and new people starting. This December there are two new people who we hope will combine with Cat and her manager (since May) to make a strong, positive team for the store and keep it feeling



settled for the next year at least! Change is the only constant in this job. The never-ending challenges of parenting are also consistent, but a solid support group of parents, combined with church friends, are keeping her going. And finally rather than dance, this year the exercise has switched to a bounce class - exercise on mini-trampolines, high energy and a lot of fun! Cat has also had a couple of amazing travel opportunities with work this year - heading to Las Vegas in July for the work international awards offered the opportunity to catch up with an old friend from the UK, who flew from Atlanta across to Las Vegas to drive to the Grand Canyon for a couple of days (SUCH an amazing time catching up); and then in September an incredible opportunity to spend a week travelling Iceland with a coach full of travel agents. The absolute highlight of this was seeing the Northern Lights - THREE times in a week. It's a beautiful country, the group packed in so much and had so much fun.



And then as a family we have travelled too! Trips down to the coast house we love to borrow here and there; and nights away at caravan parks (in a cabin!) - with the kids, with friends, and as a family. And then in August, a big trip to the UK for an old friend's wedding! We stopped in Crete on the way for a lovely warm relaxed week with the Butcher family who travelled across from Bournemouth - the biggest decisions of the week were which swimming pool to use, and which flavour icecream to eat. It was perfect, with everyone having opportunities to have some time out and refresh, and so lovely for the girls to have some really good quality time with their godparents and Matthew & Alice. From Crete we flew across to the UK for 8 days catching up with as many family and friends as we could pack in, from a weekend in Surrey which included Aunty Helen & Uncle Anthony, Grandma Lizzie, Aunty Cath & Uncle Matt, a drop in on Hannah & Henry driving north, and time in Yorkshire which included Aunty Mair, Nana (Carole), Grandma & Grandpa (A-W), Grandma & Grandpa Taylor, Aunty Sarah, and Uncle Bri. Pete also managed to fit in a stag weekend in Amsterdam, and a visit to Edinburgh to meet his nephew Josh and catch up with Vicki too - and then there was the wedding itself, where the girls charmed their way into everyone's hearts while they were at it! It was a busy 8 days, and we are so blessed that we were able to spend some good quality time with each of the family and really give the girls a chance to get to know them all better.



As well as travel, we've kept busy with lots of other things. We've been to the theatre (Disney on Ice, and the Australian Ballet), we've explored new playgrounds, and spent a lot of time splashing at the river as well. Playdates and parties, church and dance classes, even the occasional sleepover are all part of the regular family life. And finally, we knocked out an internal wall from the house at the start of the year - and now I've forgotten it was ever there! The living space feels much more open and family-centred, and we love our new kitchen bench. It was designed to bring the family closer together in the limited time we all have at home, and it really has done that. Next step: painting!

So it's been a full year. A challenging year, but a very fulfilling year, with some outstanding experiences for everyone. 2020 is designed to be closer to home, but it will no doubt be no less challenging, and just as fulfilling!

