Five places that made me

Martin Woods, author

ROCKHAMPTON
After graduating from university, a friend and I followed our noses north from Adelaide in his ageing Commodore. Over the next year we played football in the Riverland and Brisbane, did all sorts of labouring jobs, and just hung out. We got as far as Rockhampton, where I broke my leg. The mishap woke me up. I returned to study. Before long it seemed, I was in Canberra at the War Memorial and then the National Library.

NAPLES, ITALY
Many years ago now, some good friends rented an apartment in Naples, and I took the opportunity to visit Italy for the first time. I had just started as maps curator at the National Library, so naturally I spent some time studying the magnificent Galleria delle carte geografiche (Gallery of maps) in the Vatican.

TANNA, VANUATU
In 2009 my wife, Martine, and I travelled to Vanuatu, with few expectations other than relaxation, and perhaps for a chance of getting close to a volcano on the remote island of Tanna. To my even greater amazement we blundered in on a hillside cafe run by Telopea Park School, Canberra.

CORNY POINT, YORKE PENINSULA
We were gearing up for a major exhibition a few years ago, and I knew if I didn’t take a week off I wouldn’t see daylight for a long time. So I decided to take a short time-out in a place which (as a South Australian) I should have visited many years ago. The Yorke Peninsula is not without tourism, but they don’t get a lot of outside visitors so it’s a make-do holiday enjoying the simple pleasures.

ISTANBUL, TURKEY
Flying into Istanbul in 2014 I struck up a long conversation with a man returning home to Turkey after years of trying to earn a living in Britain. He was very proud of the economic strides his country had recently made. Istanbul has many attractions. As a runner, I often crossed the Kennedy Caddesi at first light and ran along the eight-mile avenue that follows the old Sea Walls of the city.