

Country NSW

HOLIDAY PLANNER

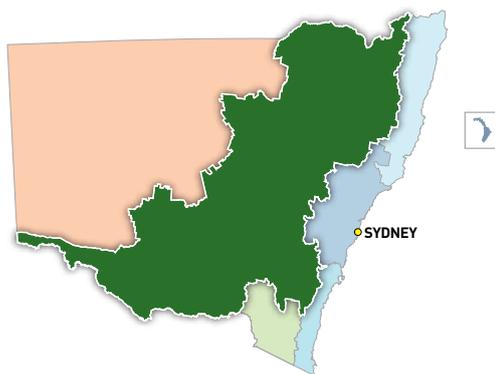


Destination
NSW





Contents



- Country NSW
- NSW Short Breaks
- NSW Outback
- Snowy Mountains NSW
- North Coast of NSW
- South Coast of NSW
- Lord Howe Island NSW

Copyright © Destination New South Wales, 2012.
 Base mapping copyright © Explore Australia Publishing Pty Ltd, 2012. Every effort has been made to ensure that the details on this map were accurate at the time of going to press. The publisher cannot accept any responsibility for any errors or omissions. The representation on the map of any road is not necessarily evidence of public right of way.

front cover: Burrawang West Station, Trundle, NSW (Mark Pokorny).
inside front cover: View of canola fields in Harden, Riverina (Paul Foley).
above left to right: Young girl at a farm near Moree, New England North West (Paul Matthews); Farm near Armidale, New England North West (Paul Foley).

4	Country NSW	26	Mudgee region and towns
6	Upper Hunter Country	28	Wagga Wagga and surrounds
8	New England North West	30	Griffith and surrounds
12	The Warrumbungles and towns	32	The Murray River and towns
14	Dubbo	36	Young, Harden and Boorowa
16	Orange, Dubbo and Mudgee drive	38	Goulburn and Crookwell
18	Bathurst	40	Bungendore, Braidwood and Queanbeyan
20	Cowra and Orange	42	Yass Valley
22	Wellington, Cabonne and Blayney	44	Events
24	Parkes and surrounds	46	Traveller Information



An initiative of Destination New South Wales on behalf of the NSW Government

While Destination New South Wales makes every effort to ensure the information contained in this publication is true and correct at the time of publication, some information may be incorrect or may have changed since publication. All information contained in this publication is subject to change or update without notice. Before relying on any information contained in this publication you are therefore advised to personally confirm all information prior to making any travel, holiday or other arrangements. Destination New South Wales cannot guarantee and assumes no legal liability or responsibility for the accuracy, currency or completeness of the information.

This publication may include tourism products and service information supplied by third parties. Inclusion in this publication is not an endorsement of the information or of the supplier of the information.

Care has been taken to ensure legitimate usage of any copyright material. Destination New South Wales welcomes any information from entities who believe their copyright may have been infringed by this publication.

ABN 16 961 498 210 1112-0033-0210 Published August 2012

Country NSW centre of the state...

Covering the State from north to south, Country NSW stretches across the sunny western plains, from the cool rainforests of the Great Dividing Range to the ochre-coloured expanse of the Outback.

Slow down and take the time to explore Country NSW. You'll receive a warm welcome and an invitation to share the rewards of country living – wide open spaces, pristine national parks and river systems, fresh produce bursting with flavour and wines recognised as some of the world's best.

You'll also discover a calendar of events that evokes Australia's rural heartland and music festivals that tap into the true spirit of country.

So stretch your legs, camp out under the Milky Way with a glass of good red and experience Country NSW.



this page top to bottom: Picnic on The Murray (Rob Blackburn); Shopping at Dubbo Markets (Andreas Smetana).

following page top to bottom: Spectacular views of The Breadknife and surrounding volcanic plugs of Warrumbungles National Park (Susan Wright); Goulburn streetscape (Paul Livingstone; Capital Country Tourism); Having a yarn in the woolshed, Scone, Upper Hunter Country (Anson Smart).

...larger than life





Upper Hunter Country

Endowed with lakes and pristine forests, this is an area with a stirring history, a passion for all things equestrian and a taste for the good life.



MUST SEE AND DO

Follow the Upper Hunter Wine Trail and discover some of the boutique labels that you won't see in your local bottle shop.

Pack your fishing rod, hitch a boat on the back of your car and spend a day out fishing or exploring on Lake Glenbawn or Lake St Clair.

Visit Burning Mountain Nature Reserve, about 20 km north of Scone, where the coal seam has been smouldering for more than 5,500 years.

above left to right: Walking through the vines at Cruickshank Callatoota Estate, Upper Hunter (Phillip Quirk); Belltrees Estate, Scone (Anson Smart); Horse-riding, Upper Hunter Country.

below: Thunderbolts Lookout, Barrington Tops National Park (Hamilton Lund).

Pleasures from the past

The rich farmlands along the river systems of this region were among the first to be settled during Australia's pioneering period. Many of the towns that grew up to service these early settlements have a wealth of churches, hotels, gaols and courthouses dating from those early years. Some of the churches from this era are particularly well preserved. Take a look at St Alban's in Muswellbrook, St Luke's in Scone and the magnificent chapel in the Mercy Sisters Convent, next to Singleton's St Patrick's Catholic Church. Ask for a Heritage Walking tour brochure at the visitor information centres in Murrurundi, Merriwa, Scone, Muswellbrook and Singleton, and be sure to check out the local museums.

The antique shops found in these country towns are a treasure trove for collectors of bric-à-brac and rustic antiques as well as old farming implements and tools.

Life and style

Nestled in a pretty valley enclosed by hills to the east and west, Scone calls itself 'the Horse Capital of Australia', and the manicured horse studs all around the town do give it a rather gentrified air. The region's thoroughbred industry is said to be second only to Kentucky in size and value, and several wealthy international racing syndicates maintain stables here. Many of these substantial horse studs can be seen from the New England Highway, and some offer stable tours.

Regional art galleries and many art festivals and exhibitions throughout the year showcase a wide variety of high-quality photography as well as landscapes, portraits and still lifes. The Muswellbrook Regional Art Gallery has a fine collection of works by regional artists, while the Norville Art Prize in Murrurundi, the Banool Art Prize in Scone and the Singleton Art Prize attract the best of the local talent.

The region has a long tradition of eating well, and local markets – a regular fixture in towns such as Aberdeen and Murrurundi – are a great place to shop for fresh local produce. Look for olives, fruit, macadamia nuts, jams, honeys and soft cheeses. Keep an eye out for Hunter Belle Cheeses, and don't miss Pukara Estate's olive oil. The estate is open for tastings at Denman Road in Muswellbrook.

Call of the wilderness

Surrounded by some of our finest national parks, the region is a natural paradise for lovers of the great outdoors. Wollemi National Park, Barrington Tops and Mount Royal National Park have excellent networks of hiking tracks suitable for every level, from short rainforest strolls to multi-day hikes through challenging country. For mountain bikers looking for a real adventure, the Mount Royal Road loop is highly recommended.

Amateur botanists will find rare and precious delights in the wet alpine forests of the



Barrington Tops, while birdwatchers can spot turquoise and king parrots, kingfishers, rosellas, wedge-tailed eagles and glossy black cockatoos – just some of the spectacular birds that can be seen in these national parks.

A 30-km drive north from Singleton takes you on a winding road that climbs through forested hills to Lake St Clair, penned behind the walls of Glennies Creek Dam. The 1500-hectare lake has campsites and powered sites for caravans, barbecue areas and a boat ramp, while the lake is stocked with bass, perch and catfish. Beyond the lake lies Mount Royal State Forest, which can be accessed only by 4WD vehicles.

Lake Glenbawn State Park, 14 km to the east of Scone, is a lovely spot for a day out water-skiing, swimming, sailing, canoeing or sailboarding. Created to regulate the flow of the Hunter River and also to supply irrigation and domestic water, the lake is known for its freshwater fishing.

In Goulburn River National Park, south-west of Merriwa, a walking track leads to Lees Pinch Lookout, where you can enjoy spectacular views from the escarpment. There's a fee-free camping ground on the main Barrington Tops Forest Road that makes a great base for exploring the area. In the northern section of Barrington Tops National Park, a 200m trail leads to Devils Hole Lookout, which offers a panoramic view across thickly forested mountain ranges that topple into deep canyons.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Singleton Visitor Information & Enterprise Centre on 1800 449 888

Muswellbrook Visitor Information Centre on 1800 065 773

Scone Visitor Information & Wine Centre on 02 6540 1300

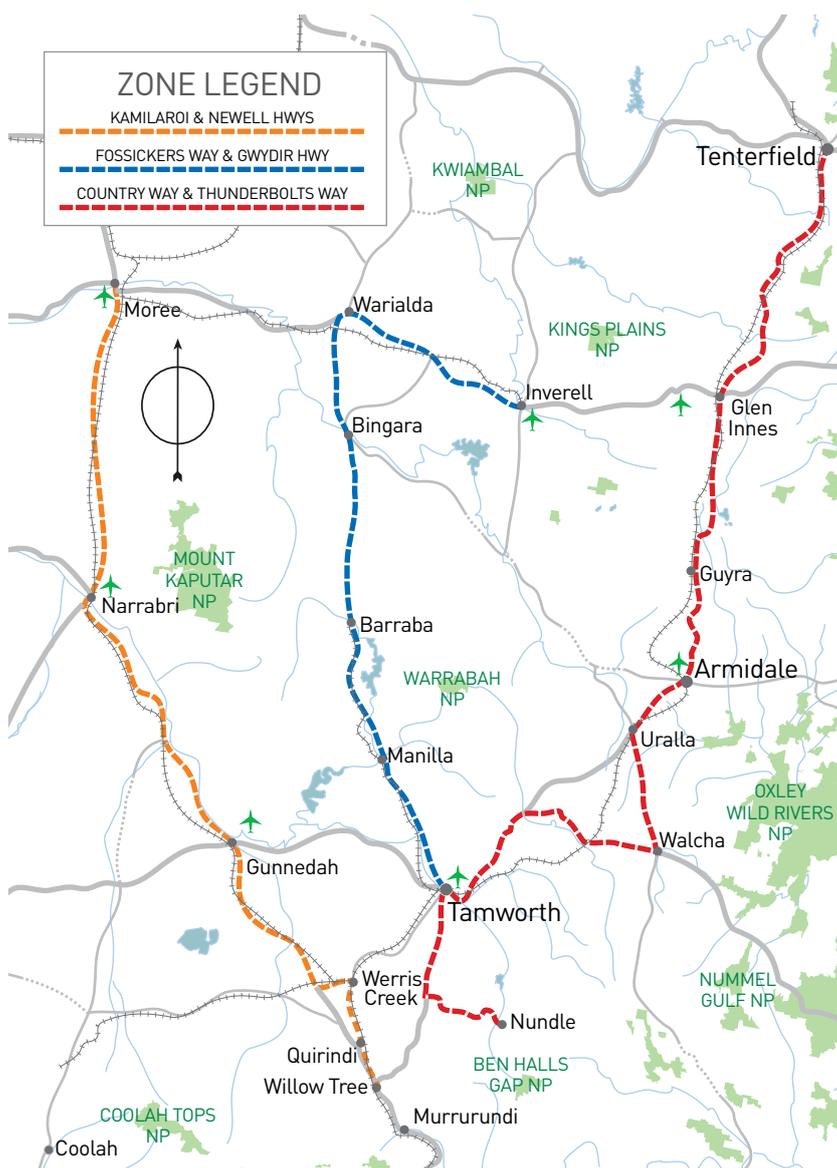
Merriwa Visitor Information Centre on 02 6521 7046





New England North West

Sloping westward from the Great Dividing Range, this vast area of sweeping plains is alive with natural wonders and a fascinating history.



Follow this touring guide and you'll be amazed by the vast horizons and clear night skies that have earned this part of the State the name of Big Sky Country.

The Kamilaroi and Newell highways

Wide open spaces and big-hearted towns
The route begins at Willow Tree, in the south of New England North West, then makes a short detour to Werris Creek before continuing north-west along the Kamilaroi Highway to Narrabri, where it joins the Newell Highway to Moree.

Quirindi, south of Tamworth, is famous for its vast tracts of sunflowers, which erupt in a blaze of colour between December and March. About 18 km north-east is Quipolly Dam, a flora and fauna sanctuary. From the dam, drive west along Lowes Creek Road, then turn right onto Bridges Road to Werris Creek.

Werris Creek, once an important railway town, has a magnificent complex of railway buildings and the Australian Rail Journeys Monument, a tribute to the railway industry and the workers who built it. Drive west and follow Abouds Road to the Kamilaroi Highway, then turn north to Gunnedah.

Gunnedah calls itself the 'Koala Capital of the World', as it's home to the largest koala colony west of the Great Dividing Range. This land of sweeping plains, with rugged mountains beyond, served as the inspiration



above left to right: Swimming at Moree Hot Artisan Pool Complex (Paul Matthews); Gostwyck chapel near Uralla (Paul Foley); View from the top of Bald Rock National Park (Paul Foley); Wheat fields in Narrabri (Paul Foley).

for Australia's most quoted poem – *My Country* by Dorothea MacKellar. It was in the Gunnedah area that the poet came to love 'a sunburnt country'. Continue north along the Kamilaroi Highway to Narrabri.

Narrabri is between the Pilliga Scrub – the largest cypress pine forest in the southern hemisphere – and the Nandewar Range. In Australia's cotton capital you can visit the Australian Cotton Centre and also the CSIRO Australia Telescope at Culgoora, 20 km west. East of Narrabri, the Mount Kaputar National Park features the 40m high columnar basalt cliff face called Sawn Rocks – a must see.

Moree is one of Australia's richest agricultural areas, yet the town is more famous as the country's artesian-spa capital. When farmers drilling for water tapped into the Great Artesian Basin, the high mineral content of the hot water gushing to the surface made it unsuitable for irrigation but invaluable for therapeutic purposes. Each year, about 300,000 visitors take a plunge in the Moree Hot Mineral Baths.

Fossickers Way and the Gwydir Highway

Gemstones that put a sparkle in your travels The Fossickers Way begins at Tamworth and continues north through Manilla, Barraba, Bingara and Wialda, where the route turns east along the Gwydir Highway to Inverell.

Manilla, looped by the Namoi and Manilla rivers, is the thriving centre of a mixed farming area. Lake Keepit, west of Manilla, and Split Rock Dam to the north provide irrigation for the cotton farms and habitat for wading birds. Continue north along the Fossickers Way to Barraba.

Barraba is a handsome 1830s town steeped in bushranger history. Check out the bullet holes made by bank robbers in the door of the Victoria Hotel in 1894. Head north along the Fossickers Way to Bingara.

Bingara is nestled in the valley of the Gwydir River and is at its best in spring, when willows, jacarandas and silky oak bloom.

In this area fossickers may find precious and semi-precious stones. Follow the Fossickers Way north to Wialda, where it meets the Gwydir Highway.

Wialda has a number of fine heritage buildings on Hope and Stephen streets, and the 3.6-km Koorilgur Nature Walk is a treat for lovers of wildflowers. The local quarries are a source of agate, jasper, chalcedony and petrified wood. Turn east on the Gwydir Highway for Inverell.

Inverell took on extra shine in the 19th century when blue sapphires were discovered in the mellow valleys formed by the Macintyre and Swan Brook rivers. Today's gem seekers can try their luck at public fossicking areas, and around town you'll find equipment, advice and local know-how. Visitors should also call in to the Pioneer Village on the city's outskirts.

MUST SEE AND DO

See Armidale in autumn and experience the molten-copper colours of chestnut and maple trees against the backdrop of church spires on the skyline.

Fossick for sapphires in Inverell or Glen Innes, but if your luck is out, the sapphire shops take credit cards.

Fish, waterski, sail and camp beside the Copeton Dam, Lake Keepit or the Gwydir River at Bingara.

Take a farm tour in harvest season for pecans, olives and cotton.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mount Kaputar (1200 m) provides stunning views over the New England and vast western plains. It is the highest point between here and South Africa, and from its peak you can see one-tenth of NSW.

Both Tenterfield's Sir Henry Parkes Memorial School of Arts and Parkes himself are depicted on the Federation \$5 note, first issued in January 2001.

Although the bushranger Captain Thunderbolt was cornered and shot by the police in 1870, anecdotal evidence suggests that it was his half-brother Harry who was killed and buried at Uralla.

Oxley Wild Rivers National Park is home to the State's highest waterfall, the Wollomombi Falls. The falls tumble over two separate drops totalling 480 m.



EVENTS

January: Country Music Festival, Tamworth – 10 whole days of country music fun.

March: Oracles of the Bush, Tenterfield, is a four-day celebration of colourful bush poetry coinciding with Tenterfield's brilliant autumn.

March: Opera in the Paddock is an open air, classic music event held annually on the property "Mimosa" Delungra, 25km west of Inverell. Held in a picturesque bush setting the concert commences on dusk and is presented by some of Australia's finest professional singers, a chamber orchestra, a pianist and a conductor.

March: Nosh on the Namoi. The best picnic you'll ever have, with music, art, food and cooking classes.

May: New England Bach Festival. Armidale is a fitting back drop for this biennial three-day festival, featuring buskers and symphony orchestras in 2012.

August: AgQuip Gunnedah. One of the largest agricultural field days in the southern hemisphere.

October: Gourmet in the Glen. A weekend of wine, food and music in Glen Innes.

October: Telstra Country Wide Sapphire City Festival, Inverell. Celebrate the colours of spring with 10 days of events and fun.

above left to right: The Golden Guitar at Tamworth (Jann Tuxford); Fossicking in Inverell (Paul Foley); Café dining, Armidale mall (Paul Foley); Australian Standing Stones (Paul Foley).

below: Gwydir River Trail Rides, near Bingara (Paul Foley).

The Country Way (New England Hwy) and Thunderbolts Way

Wilderness and classic country towns From Nundle, a former gold-mining town, follow the New England Highway through Tamworth, and detour east to Walcha to visit some wilderness wonders. Continue north through Uralla, Armidale, Guyra, Glen Innes and Tenterfield.

Nundle and its celebrated Jenkins Street boast many reminders of the town's flamboyant past, including the Courthouse Museum and the Mount Misery Underground Gold Mine and Gold Museum, located in a former coffin factory. Join the New England Highway, then drive north to Tamworth.

Tamworth hosts one of the world's biggest events – the annual 10-day Country Music Festival. Visit the Big Golden Guitar and the Walk A Country Mile exhibition for a year-round taste of country music. Drive north along the New England Highway to the junction of the Oxley Highway, then turn east to Walcha.

Walcha is located on the eastern slopes of the Great Dividing Range. The historic town is close to Oxley Wild Rivers and Werrikimbe national parks, two superb natural wonders that provide bushwalkers with a real treat. Drive north to Uralla via Thunderbolts Way.

Uralla boomed after gold was discovered in 1851 at Rocky River. Visit the grave of bushranger Frederick Ward, also known

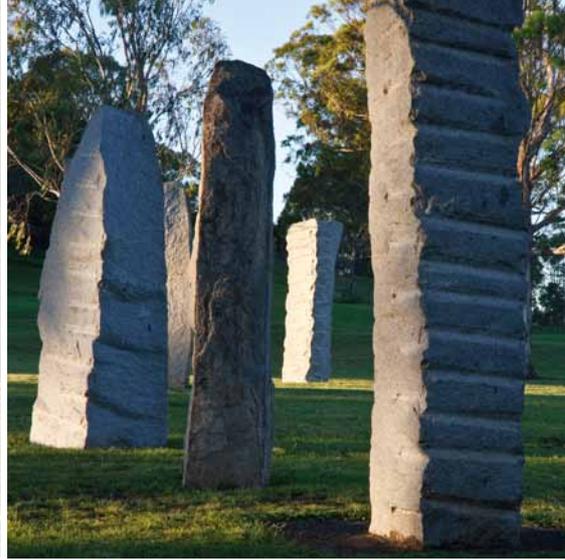
as Captain Thunderbolt. McCrossin's Mill Museum documents a rich local history. Continue north along the New England Highway to Armidale.

Armidale is a city of culture and learning. Take a walking tour of its heritage precinct and make sure you visit New England Regional Art Museum. Continue along the New England Highway to Guyra.

Guyra is the highest town in the New England Tablelands and features the Mother of Ducks Lagoon, a freshwater wetland inside a volcanic crater and a breeding ground for many species of waterbirds. Follow the highway north.

Glen Innes cherishes its Celtic origins. Housed in the town's former hospital, Land Of The Beardies History House, is a folk museum with a vast collection of local artefacts. Drive north along the New England Highway to Tenterfield, the birthplace of Peter Allen.

Tenterfield, celebrated in Peter Allen's song, "Tenterfield Saddler", has one of the finest small museums in NSW, the Sir Henry Parkes Memorial School of Arts.



 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Tamworth Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6767 5300

Walcha Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6774 2460

Gunnedah Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 562 527

Narrabri Shire Visitors Centre
on 1800 659 931

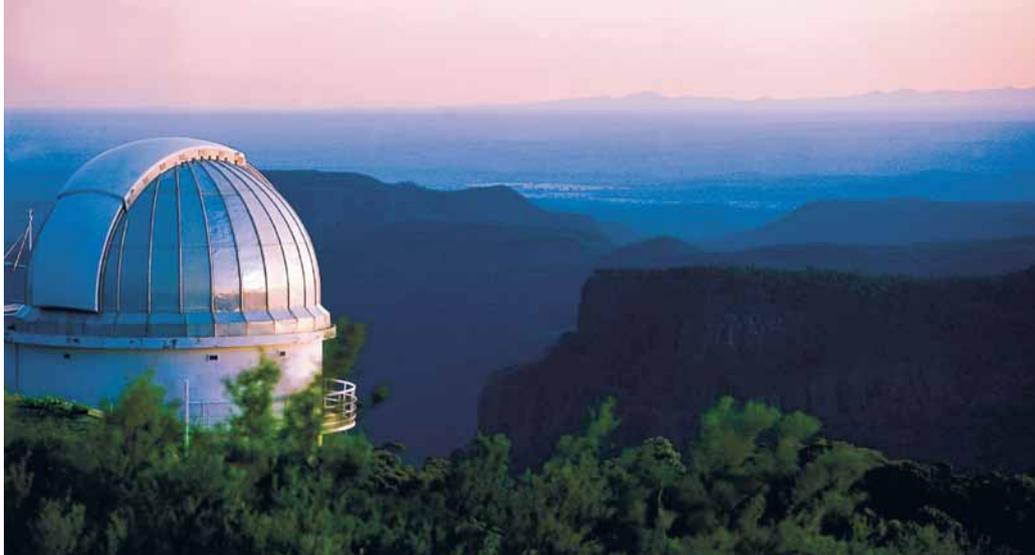
Armidale Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6770 3888

Glen Innes Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6730 2400

Inverell Visitors Centre on 1800 067 626

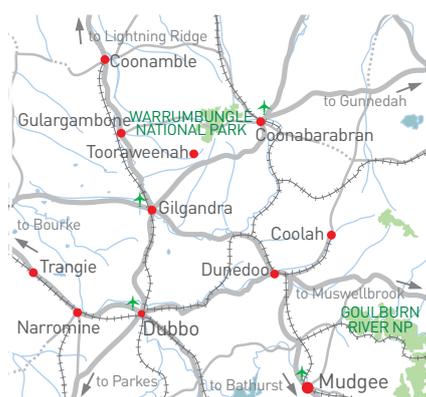
Tenterfield Gateway Visitors Information Centre on (02) 6736 1082





The Warrumbungles and surrounding towns

Admire the natural wonder of ancient volcanic spires in the Warrumbungles, stargaze in one of the area's observatories or sit with the locals at a classic country pub.



MUST SEE AND DO

Experience Narromine's link with aviation at the National Ultralight Fly-in held at Easter and the Aviation Festival on the October long weekend.

Walk the 'Breadknife, Grand High Tops' track in the Warrumbungles, one of the area's most thrilling hiking tracks and one of Australia's top 10 walks.

Go to Coonamble and see the largest combined rodeo and campdraft in the southern hemisphere.

Visit the Gilgandra Coo-ee Heritage Centre and take in the history of the 1915 Coo-ee March.

above left to right: Rodeo ridin', Coonamble (Eagle Photography); Siding Spring Observatory (David Kirkland); Sandstone caves at Pilliga Nature Reserve (Gecko Photographics); Grand High Tops at Warrumbungle National Park, (Susan Wright).

below: Warrumbungles mountain range at dusk (Susan Wright).

Warrumbungle National Park Narromine

Just west of Coonabarabran is Warrumbungle National Park, where tortured trachyte spires bear witness to a history of tremendous volcanic eruptions – upheavals that have created sensational bushwalks. It's a place where both coastal and arid plants thrive, providing a haven for a diverse range of bird and animal life.

At Coolah Tops National Park, wander through stands of giant ancient grasstrees and admire the stunning views across the Liverpool Plains.

Coonabarabran

Coonabarabran's dark and clear skies make it ideal for stargazing. Less than 200 km north-east of Dubbo, at the junction of the Newell and Oxley highways, this area is known as the Astronomy Capital of Australia and boasts some of the nation's finest 'star' attractions. You can probe the night skies at Skywatch Observatory, just 2 km from town, and at Siding Spring Observatory – the country's largest centre for optical astronomy – you can learn about the discoveries made using the world-famous 3.9m Anglo-Australian Telescope.

If you're interested in arts and crafts, visit Pilliga Pottery and watch craftworkers as they transform local clay into works of beauty.

East of Dubbo, Narromine calls itself the 'Town of Champions'. It's the birthplace of some of Australia's sporting greats, including cricketer Glenn McGrath.

Narromine has ideal conditions for gliding, so pilots from all over the world converge on Narromine to soar the renowned thermals. Visitors can take a glider flight and savour the wonder of silent flight.

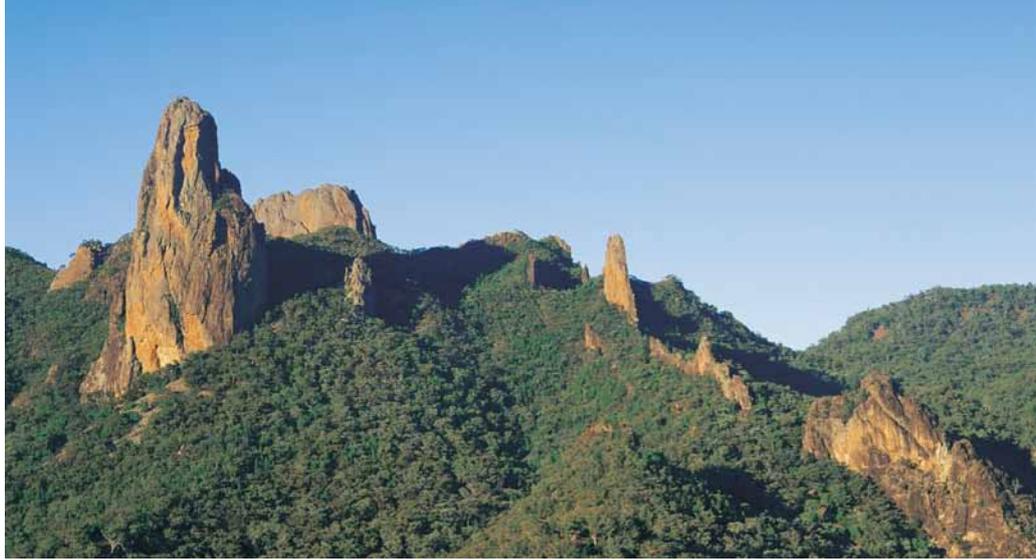
Visit the Narromine Aviation Museum and discover the fascinating collection of artefacts that tell the story of Australian aviation. A hanger nearby houses the only flying replica of the Wright Flyer in the world.

Paradise for garden lovers
Rose enthusiasts will enjoy a visit to Swane's Rose Nursery, where they can admire more than 5,000 bushes – in full flower from October to November and again between late March and April.

The Narromine Iris Farm has more than 800 varieties of tall bearded iris in flower from mid-September to November. The Lime Grove, Australia's largest lime orchard, offers tastings of their delicious preserves.

Coonamble

This proud equestrian and agricultural centre, 160 km north of Dubbo, is home to



the largest combined rodeo and campdraft in the southern hemisphere. Coonamble Shire spreads across the plains at the western edge of the Warrumbungle Range.

Outside the police station, a statue commemorates the tragic shooting of Constable John Mitchell, killed while trying to prevent a prison escape in 1885.

Pick up a guide and tour the historic streets, almost destroyed by fire in 1929 and later restored in Art Deco style. Here you can also sample the classic country pub, one of the delights of rural travel. Coonamble itself has four pubs, and the outlying villages, including Quambone and Come-By-Chance, boast fine character-filled historic pubs where you can share a yarn with a local over an ale or two.

Gulargambone

Gulargambone, midway between Gilgandra and Coonamble, means 'watering place of many birds' and the town has adopted the galah as its own – as you can see from the corrugated iron galahs located at the approaches to the town. Call in at the Two Eight Two Eight Café and Gallery and see a small, thriving rural community with character and courage.

Gilgandra

Gilgandra, 65 km north of Dubbo, lacked a water supply until 1966, so its residents used windmills to access sub-artesian water. As a result, Gilgandra is known as the 'Town of Windmills', and many of the original 300 remain.

The town played a significant role during World War I: the Hitchen brothers led 26 volunteers to Sydney, enlisting others along the way until there were 236 recruits, who became known as The Coo-ees for their rallying cry. The Coo-ee Heritage Centre tells this story as well as the Aboriginal and European history of the region.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Gilgandra Co-ee Heritage & Visitor Centre
on (02) 6817 8700

Coonabarabran Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 242 881





Dubbo

This vibrant city with its enviable lifestyle knows how to give visitors a good time, whether they're delving into the pioneering days or watching exotic animals at play.



MUST SEE AND DO

Plan a two-day trip to Western Plains Zoo. Walk, drive or ride around the zoo each day and stay overnight at Zoofari Lodge.

Take a trip through time at Old Dubbo Gaol, which re-creates a snapshot of 19th century prison life.

Experience a slice of Australia's pioneering history at Dundullimal Homestead, a brilliant evocation of life on the frontier.

Test your boomerang toss at Jemma Boomerangs, where boomerangs are expertly crafted from mulga wood.

above left to right: Dundullimal Homestead (Susan Wright); Feeding the giraffes at Western Plains Zoo; Brisbane Street, Dubbo (Gecko Photographics); Old Dubbo Gaol (Pip Blackwood).

Regional centre

In the fertile Macquarie Valley, just five hours' drive north-west of Sydney, lies Dubbo, home to an internationally acclaimed open-range zoo. With 80 return flights from Sydney each week and daily XPT rail services, this major regional centre is easy to access from all over the State.

There is accommodation to suit all budgets, including motels, B&Bs, caravan parks and even zoo-based accommodation. And for eating out, you can choose from nearly 100 eateries, offering everything from international cuisine to superb regional produce.

Glorious past

Since the end of the 19th century, Dubbo has been the major commercial and service centre for western NSW, and among the city's banks, hotels, churches and civic buildings are some outstanding examples of that era's architecture, such as the Commercial Hotel, the Lands Office Building and the Courthouse. From the visitor information centre, collect a Heritage Walk brochure detailing the city's historic buildings and walk Dubbo's heritage streets.

Behind bars

On Macquarie Street, Old Dubbo Gaol is now a museum, providing a chilling reminder of the horrors of life in a Victorian prison. Built in 1871, the displays inside include a large assembly of animatronic models that bring the era to life. Elsewhere in

the gaol, a gallows pole with hangman's equipment, the condemned man's cell, solitary confinement cells, the watchtower and a graffiti-covered cell all add graphic realism to the visitor's experience.

Wild kingdom

One of the best reasons for heading to Dubbo is the Taronga Western Plains Zoo. This is Australia's leading open-range zoo, home to more than 1,000 animals, many of them endangered species from all around the world.

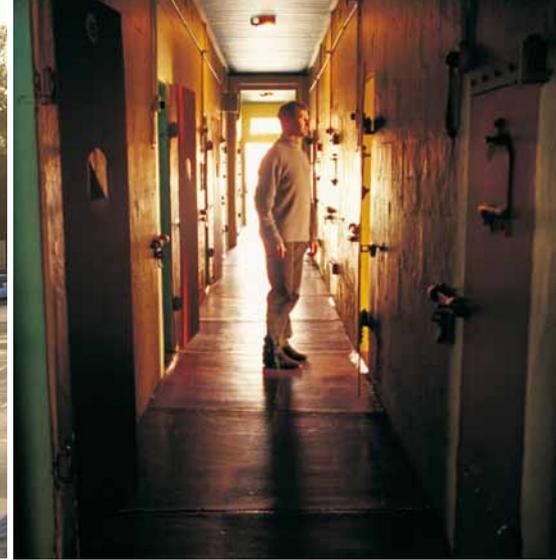
Visitors can either drive, walk or cycle the zoo's 6-km loop road, passing the various animal enclosures en route.

African animals such as lion, elephant, rhino, giraffe and various antelope species make up a large part of the population – it's like Africa in your own backyard. Most of the primates are on islands surrounded by lakes.

There's lots to do and see, so a two-day stay is essential for making the most of it. Better still, spend a night at the Zoofari Lodge and fall asleep to the sounds of the African wild.

Historic homestead

Just 7 km south of Dubbo and only 1 km from Western Plains Zoo, Dundullimal is a timber-slab homestead that dates from the 1840s, the oldest surviving example of this style in Australia. Originally the homestead for a 6,500-hectare squatting run, Dundullimal is a great place to get a sense of Dubbo's pioneering past. The sitting room still has its



original tent-shaped plaster ceiling as well as wallpaper reproduced from an 1850s design.

Learn at leisure

Take a fascinating journey of discovery at these Dubbo attractions.

Heavenly bodies

A visit to Dubbo Observatory begins with a slide show. Visitors then get the chance to view the night sky through one of three 12-inch computerised telescopes that can locate 64,000 different objects in the universe at the touch of a button. The privately operated observatory is located on Camp Road, next to Taronga Western Plains Zoo. Bookings for the night sessions are essential.

Fun park

The Big M Dubbo is a day of fun for the whole family – all in one location. The complex has an 18-hole undercover mini-golf course, a Jurassic Maze and a science expo with scientific puzzles and interactive exhibits. The park also has a military museum with many exhibits of military hardware from World War II. Here you can discover vintage tanks, planes and guns.

Japanese garden

A collaborative project with Dubbo's Sister City, Minokamo in Japan, Shoyoen Sister City Garden and Jurian Tea House is located in Elizabeth Park. Here you can enjoy the tranquil beauty of a garden that has been especially designed to mimic the mountains and the sea

in nature. The garden has all the features of a traditional Japanese garden – a dry stone garden, cherry tree mounds, a lake filled with carp and a teahouse.

Family fun

There are lots of fun activities for the whole family in Dubbo. Young families will love the Kidzoo Playhouse in Cobra Street, a purpose-built indoor play gym, where children can play while their parents enjoy time out at the café.

Suitable for families with older children, Western Plains Riding Centre in Merrilea Road offers a range of horse-back rides. Choose from a one-hour ride overlooking Dubbo, a two-hour ride on stock reserves or, for more experienced riders, a half day's ride to Talbragar River.

The wine trail

Dubbo has a small but emerging wine industry. The Macquarie Valley produces a variety of red and white wines, which show exceptional promise. Dubbo is one of the few regions in the world where the petit verdot grape – the source of the noble red wines of Bordeaux – can ripen to its optimum flavour.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Dubbo Visitors Centre & Events Bureau
on 1800 674 443

Old Dubbo Gaol

The computer age has made the jailhouse rock – and going to gaol has never been this much fun.

Built in the second half of the 19th century and now fully restored, Old Dubbo Gaol has been vividly brought back to life through the brilliant use of animatronics and holograms.

Meet the condemned man, the ghost of Old Dubbo Gaol and the executioner and his grisly tool-of-trade, the gallows.

In the darkness of the theatre you'll see the chilling-but-true story of life at the gaol. Enhanced by holograms, the narrator tells a tale more riveting than any Hollywood horror movie.

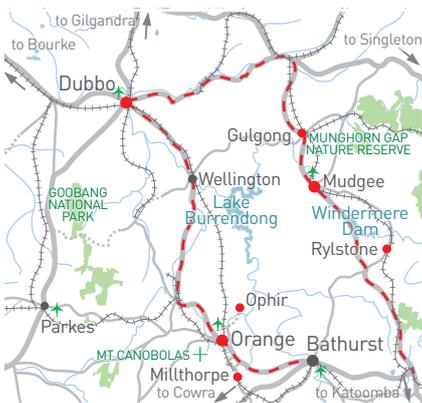
Old Dubbo Gaol is open daily, from 9am to 4.30pm. Enter via the lane-way adjacent to 90 Macquarie Street.

 For further information about Old Dubbo Gaol go to olddubbogaol.com.au or call (02) 6801 4460.



Orange, Dubbo and Mudgee drive

This drive takes you on a circuit through Orange, Dubbo and Mudgee – three of the best reasons you'll ever find for packing a bag and heading to the country.



MUST SEE AND DO

Hire a bike in Mudgee and take a two-wheeled vineyard tour.

At Lake Canobolas, near Orange, take a swim, explore the walking trails or enjoy a picnic.

With around 50 wineries offering cellar-door sales, Mudgee gives visitors plenty of opportunities to take home some special souvenirs.

above left to right: Union Bank Wine Bar and wine store (Evolving images); Mount Frome vineyard in Mudgee (Evolving images); Elephants at Western Plains Zoo (Gecko Photographics).

Hit the road

Starting from Sydney, this touring route takes you west to Orange, then north to Dubbo before turning south-east to Mudgee. Three days is a practical minimum for the journey from Sydney and back, but you could easily spend a week indulging in a rambling country escape.

From Parramatta Road in Sydney, turn right onto the M4 (Western Motorway), which begins at Strathfield. Follow the M4 to Lapstone in the Blue Mountains, where the M4 becomes the Great Western Highway. The highway passes through the cities of Katoomba, Lithgow and Bathurst, where it becomes the Mitchell Highway and continues to Orange. The 260-km journey from Sydney to Orange takes about 3½ hours.

Orange

Handsome, historic and cultured, Orange is enjoying a growing reputation as a high-quality source of rare and seasonal produce. This is immediately apparent in the local cafés and restaurants and in the farmers' markets, which are held in the showground on the second Saturday of each month. Stop for the night so you can sample the excellent regional cuisine in one of the city's fine restaurants.

Pick up an Orange City Heritage Trail brochure from the visitor information centre and stroll around the city's fine historic buildings. Don't miss the superb Orange Regional Art Gallery.

Just a short distance along Forest Road from the heart of the city, Gosling Creek Reserve has been redeveloped into an environmentally based recreational facility. Built around a historic reservoir that originally supplied the

city with water, it includes picnic and recreation areas with a shared pathway suitable for walking, cycling and roller-blading,

From Orange, take the Mitchell Highway north through Molong and Wellington to Dubbo. The 150-km journey takes about 1½ hours.

Dubbo

Standing head and shoulders above all other attractions in the area, Taronga's Western Plains Zoo is a major-league attraction, sufficient reason alone to make the journey to Dubbo. Zoo tickets are valid for two days – and you'll certainly need both days if you want to see the very best the zoo has to offer.

Make sure you're in the audience for the keeper talks and feeding sessions – a fascinating way to learn about some of the world's endangered species.

One of the earliest settlements west of the Great Dividing Range, Dubbo has a legacy of historic architecture.

Dundullimal, a homestead dating from the 1840s, speaks volumes about the ingenuity and sheer resilience of Australia's pioneers, while Old Dubbo Gaol brings the Victorian penal system thrillingly to life with animated models and computerised wizardry. From Dubbo, head east on the Golden Highway for about 20 minutes and follow the signs to Mudgee.

Mudgee

En route to Mudgee you'll find the town of Gulgong. Founded in the heady days of the gold rush, its main street has 130 National Trust-classified buildings that reveal the town's



Call of the wild

There's so much to see and do at Taronga Western Plains Zoo that tickets to this blockbuster attraction are valid for two consecutive days.

history. Gulgong is a creative hub, with many artisans exhibiting their work in the large and modern Cudgegong Gallery, a stark contrast to the historical streetscape. The 140-km trip to Mudgee from Dubbo takes less than 2 hours.

About 50 wineries in the Mudgee region offer cellar-door sales, so make sure you leave some room in your boot. Mudgee vineyards include some excellent organic wineries and you'll have plenty of opportunities to take home some special wines that you won't be able to find in your local liquor store.

Mudgee also has a number of appealing accommodation options, so it's not too hard to find excuses for staying a night or two. If you feel like stretching your legs, head to the village of Rylstone and continue to Dunns Swamp, where the waters of the Cudgegong River are backed up behind Kandos Weir, making a lovely backdrop for a bushwalk. .

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Dubbo Visitors Centre & Events Bureau
on 1800 674 443

Wellington Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 621 614

Mudgee Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 816 304

Parkes Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 624 365

Orange Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 069 466

Africa in your own backyard

Sprawling across more than 300 hectares, Taronga Western Plains Zoo houses 700 animals. The diversity is incredible – from big African cats to primates, Galapagos tortoises, bilbies, yellow-footed rock wallabies, Sumatran tigers and African wild dogs. This is the only zoo in Australia where you can see African elephants.

Many of these animals are critically endangered in the wild, and the zoo maintains a breeding program to help ensure the survival of rare species, including the black rhino, the cheetah and Przewalski's horse.

On safari

You can drive around the zoo's 6-km loop road in your own vehicle or hire a bicycle or electric cart – ideal for getting around and easy to park – or tour the zoo on foot. Take a break at Bakhita's Café, located next to Savannah Lake, where you can enjoy lunch with wild views of the primate islands.

Talk to the animals

When you enter the zoo gates you'll be directed to the information centre, where you can learn all about the zoo's daily activities, including keeper talks, feeding sessions and intimate animal encounters.

Many of the animals are at their most active at dawn, so it's worthwhile getting up for the zoo's guided Early Morning Walk, which is conducted every weekend, with additional

walks on Wednesdays and Fridays during school holidays.

For the ultimate zoo experience, there's the award-winning Zoofari Lodge, nestled deep in the zoo's African Savannah. Zoofari Lodge offers unique accommodation and exclusive behind-the-scenes tours. Led by experienced guides and conducted in an air-conditioned mini coach, the tours provide a magical opportunity to get close – really close – to some amazing creatures.

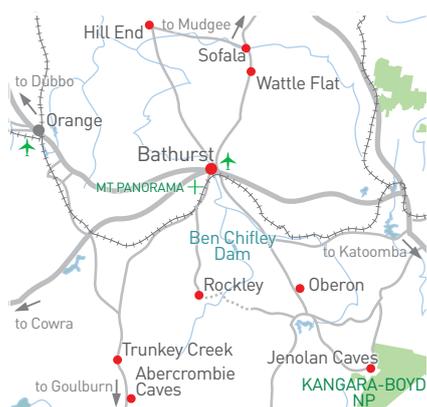
Taronga Western Plains Zoo is open from 9am to 5pm (no admission after 4pm), every day of the year.

 For more information about Taronga's Western Plains Zoo, go to zoofari.com or call (02) 6882 5888.



Bathurst

Gracious, serene and stylish, Bathurst is one of Australia's oldest inland settlements, a gateway to the gold rush towns and historical homes.



MUST SEE AND DO

Take pole position and drive a lap of the Mount Panorama Racing Circuit. But remember: normal road rules apply, especially the 60 km/h speed limit.

Strike it rich – pan for gold in the Turon River at Sofala.

Waltz around the Gold Miner's Stage in Abercrombie Caves, used by miners for dances and concerts.

Have your photo taken with a replica of the Holtermann Nugget, the largest intact nugget ever found, at History Hill, Hill End.

Look a *T. rex* in the eye at the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum.

above left to right: Historic Hill End; Sofala; Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum, Bathurst (Vince Lovecchio); Café Sofala restaurant, Sofala (Hamilton Lund).
below: Abercrombie Caves.

Living history

A three-hour drive from Sydney, on the spreading plains west of the Blue Mountains, Bathurst is virtually an open-air museum, boasting a wealth of colonial buildings that bear witness to its status as one of the oldest inland settlements in the nation. Pick up a Heritage Walk brochure from the visitor information centre and take a stroll through a city that dates back to the pioneering era and the gold rush.

Bathurst is the birthplace of Ben Chifley, one of Australia's working class heroes. Born and raised on a farm in the area, this son of a blacksmith became our 16th prime minister. Chifley Home, the modest cottage he later shared with his wife Elizabeth, is open to the public.

Art, science, culture

During the 196 years since it was established, Bathurst has developed and matured into a sophisticated city with some great attractions and a lively interest in the arts.

In the east wing of Bathurst's magnificent courthouse, one of the finest colonial buildings in the country, the Bathurst District Historical Museum has a collection of documents and photographs from the area's gold-mining era.

The outstanding former Bathurst Public School building, built in 1876, now houses the Australian Fossil and Mineral Museum,

featuring the superb private collection of minerals and other geological specimens collected over a lifetime by Warren Somerville. The collection includes crystals, diamonds, sapphires, rubies, emeralds and Australia's only complete *Tyrannosaurus rex* skeleton.

The Bathurst Regional Art Gallery has a particularly fine collection of works by Lloyd Rees, as well as some major works by the Hill End painters, a group that included Russell Drysdale and Donald Friend.

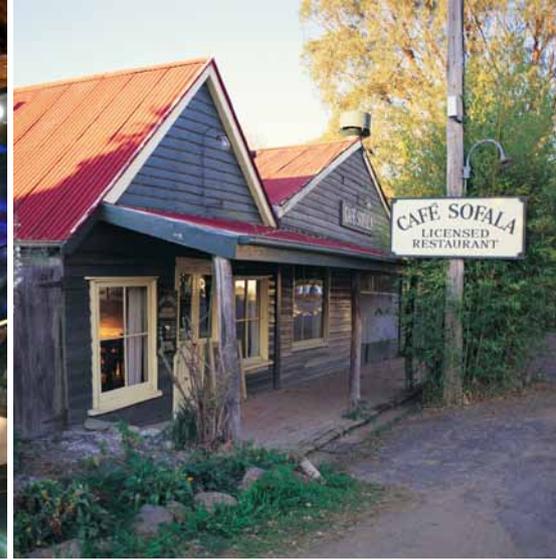
Historical homesteads

Bathurst quickly became a centre for wealthy graziers, and the city's fine buildings and homes reflect the grandeur of those early agriculturalists.

About 7 km from Bathurst, Abercrombie House is one of the most impressive stately homes in the region. Built in the 1870s and modelled on the imposing Scottish baronial style, the 40-room house was built for the Stewart family, the first Europeans to own land west of the Macquarie River. The garden's substantial outbuildings are as grand as the house itself, and the estate once accommodated 120 tenant farmers. Although privately owned, Abercrombie House is open for guided tours at specified times.

Sporting chance

Hosting the Bathurst 1000 each October, the 6.2-km Mount Panorama Motor Racing



Circuit is actually a public road for most of the year. At the National Motor Racing Museum you can check out all the drama and thunder of motor racing – hot cars, fast bikes, race videos and souvenirs – and try your skills on the racetrack simulator.

Gold rush villages

The villages that mushroomed around Bathurst during the gold rush were splendid places in their time, and today stand as examples of the architecture of the 1800s.

Hill End

About 70 km north-west of Bathurst is the village of Hill End, once a boom town where a fortune could be found with a bit of luck and the right claim. Today, the village is an echo of its past and a source of inspiration for famous landscape painters and amateur artists alike. An Artists in Residence program ensures the continuation of the village's artistic connection.

Sofala

Sofala, 40 km north of Bathurst, is a photogenic village. Take a stroll around the streets and discover the architectural delights of a bygone era.

Rockley

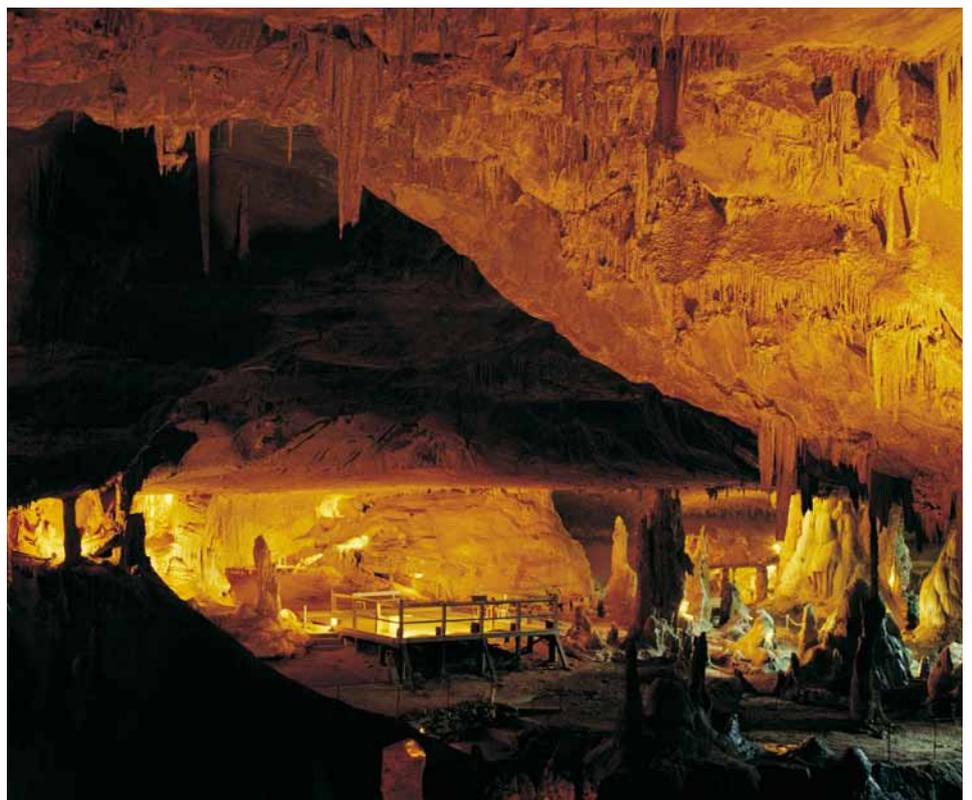
Rockley, 35 km south of Bathurst, is a former mining village that has been bypassed by time. From the hilltop to Peppers Creek, the village has a marvellous collection of buildings, and every creaking door has a tale to tell.

Underground treasure

Within a 70-km radius of Bathurst are the spectacular limestone cave systems of the Abercrombie and Jenolan Caves. Here you can take a guided tour of the fantastic formations inside or go on a self-conducted walk through the surrounding native bushland.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsw.com or contact

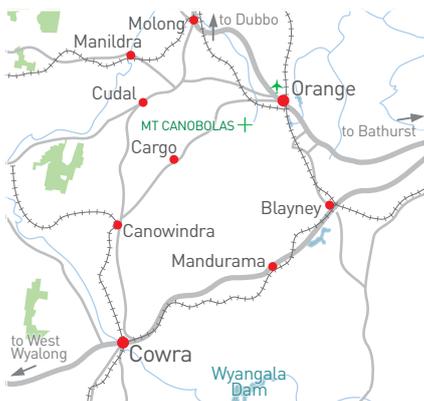
Bathurst Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 681 000





Cowra and Orange

An easy drive from Sydney encompassing Cowra and Orange area is one of Australia's key wine-growing regions, boasts Japanese gardens and hot-air balloons.



MUST SEE AND DO

Taste boutique wines at Dindima Wines in Orange. It has established an enviable reputation for its elegant cool-climate wines.

Take a dawn balloon flight from Canowindra with Balloon Joy Flights, and enjoy a bird's-eye view of the rolling countryside.

In Canowindra, visit Toms Waterhole winery, renowned for its ploughman's lunches, wood-fired pizzas and espresso.

View and appreciate works by Australian and international artists at Cowra Art Gallery.

above left to right: Cowra Japanese Gardens (Evolving Images); Mulyan Garage Cellars, Cowra (Hamilton Lund); Apple orchard in Orange (Evolving images); Hot air ballooning in Canowindra (Evolving Images).

Cowra

Cowra, 320 km west of Sydney, is situated in fertile agricultural lands in the valley of the Lachlan River. It boasts an enviable lifestyle and is famous as the site of a mass breakout of Japanese prisoners of war during World War II – one of the most dramatic episodes in Australia's history.

Japanese Garden

Cowra's Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre symbolises friendship and peace between Australia and Japan. Designed by noted Japanese garden designer Ken Nakajima, the 5-hectare garden features many traditional elements, including a tea house, bonsai house, dry *karesansui* garden, *tatami* room and ponds filled with koi carp. The Cultural Centre has three galleries with exhibits, including paintings, ceremonial kimonos and masks, model samurai and weapons, ceramics, dolls and model *torii* gate. An audio tour brings the centre to life.

Taste sensations

Cowra is acquiring a growing reputation as a wine-producing region and a source of fine specialty products – and the chefs with the flair and imagination to make the most of them.

The family-run Cowra Smokehouse produces delicious smoked meats and fish. On a free tour, discover hot and cold smoking and the advantages of their chemical- and preservative-free process. Catch your own rainbow trout from the indoor tank and have it expertly smoked on the premises – a very unusual souvenir.

Cowra's finest lamb, beef, duck and vegetables can be savoured at The Quarry Restaurant and Cellar Door. Located 4 km south of the town centre, The Quarry is the only combined cellar door and restaurant establishment in Cowra, and also the only restaurant where diners can sample a range of wines from five local vineyards – by either the glass or the bottle.

Several wineries in close proximity to the town offer cellar-door tastings. As some open only on weekends, it's a good idea to pick up a map and brochures from the visitor information centre.

Wine and art are stylishly combined at Kalari, a family owned boutique vineyard that specialises in verdelho and fortello (a fortified verdelho). Here you can sample some truly outstanding local wines while admiring the local arts and crafts, which range from watercolours to needlework. The exhibitions change monthly.

Tee off

One of the best courses west of the Blue Mountains, the 18-hole Cowra Golf Club course is home to two of the most prestigious tournaments in country NSW. The 5,954m, par-71 course also throws down a serious challenge with four of the most testing finishing holes of any golf course in NSW. Visitors are welcome to try their long game for a modest fee.

Stay in

Cowra offers a superb range of accommodation. If you're looking for something small and distinctive, there's the Old Milburn Schoolhouse B&B, a historic property where you'll wake to a country-sized gourmet breakfast of local white peaches



poached in rosewater syrup and free-range scrambled eggs with Cowra smoked trout. Alternatively, there's the smart and modern Aalana Motor Inn, located within easy walking distance of many local restaurants.

Canowindra

Canowindra is recognised for its heritage-listed main street and burgeoning wine industry. Known as the hot-air ballooning capital of Australia, here you can enjoy spectacular views with Aussie BalloonTrek. Visit the Canowindra Trading Post and browse through two floors of antiques and homewares – an eclectic mix of old and new. Relax at the café, which serves home-made sweet treats and good espresso.

Orange

Orange, 260 km from Sydney, is at the heart of one of the most beautiful and productive agricultural areas in the State – and one of the most food-conscious. It's too cold for oranges here; the name comes from the Prince of Orange, who fought alongside British forces in the Napoleonic Wars.

Gardens of seasonal change

Spread across an undulating 17-hectare site, the Orange Botanic Gardens have a heritage rose garden, a sensory garden and a homestead garden. Located on the northern side of Orange, the gardens are a perfect spot for a stroll, especially when the changing seasons are reflected in an explosion of colours and scents.

Some 12 km west of the city centre is Lake Canobolas, an idyllic spot for a relaxing picnic or a

leisurely stroll along its willow- and poplar-lined banks. From here, a 6-km drive will take you to the 1395m summit of Mount Canobolas. The local wags are fond of saying that if you were to draw a straight line west from here, you wouldn't find a higher spot until the coast of Africa.

The walking trails that thread around the slopes of Mount Canobolas are an excellent place to see bird and animal life.

Pleasures of the palate

Over the past few years, a number of cool-climate wineries have been established in Orange, including many boutique wineries such as Dindima Wines.

You might purchase your wine from the person who has planted the vines, fretted over the fermentation and labelled the bottles. The Cellar Doors brochure, available from the visitor information centre, will show you the way.

Thanks to its cool climate and rich soils, the city of Orange produces an enormous range of foods – from stone fruits and sheep's cheeses to fungi. The city showcases its excellent array of seasonal produce in the farmers' markets, held on the second Saturday of each month in the Orange Showground, but there are also many distinguished restaurants where expert chefs work wonders with the local produce. Saplings Café, next to the Botanic Gardens, is a prime example.

Walking with history

You can appreciate Orange's heritage architecture on the Orange City Heritage Trail. Included on the list of more than 40

sites is the neoclassical Court House, the Golden Memories Museum and the imposing Duntryleague, a Victorian lacework-encrusted mansion built for a local businessman who had 12 children. It's now a guesthouse. A brochure with details of the walk is available from the visitor information centre.

Significant art collection

The Orange Regional Art Gallery has one of the finest collections of any regional gallery, including paintings by Sir Sidney Nolan, Brett Whiteley and John Olsen. The gallery also has significant collections of contemporary Australian paintings and prints, jewellery, sculptural ceramics and art clothes – with a fine array of craft pieces available in the gallery shop.

Visit the city's galleries, gardens, restaurants, wineries and historic sites and you'll have a perfect recipe for a long weekend.

Lodgings of distinction

If your idea of heaven is a night in a heritage guesthouse, a cosy B&B such as the Cleveland or a historic homestead like Nyrang, you can be sure of a big-hearted welcome in Cowra.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsw.com or contact

Cowra Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 266 173

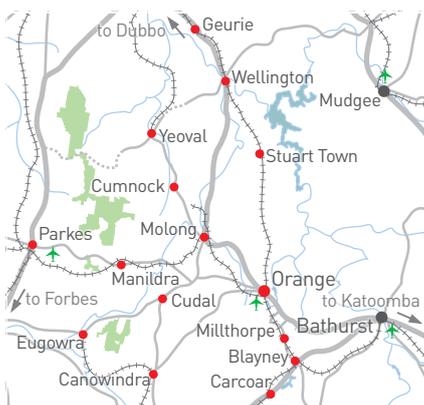
Canowindra Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6344 1008

Orange Visitor Information Centre on
1800 069 466



Wellington, Cabonne and Blayney

Wind your way along food and wine trails, discovering historic villages of the gold rush era, picturesque landscapes and caves brimming with fossils.



MUST SEE AND DO

Float above picturesque Canowindra in a hot-air balloon.

See fossilised remains of ancient fish at the Age of Fishes Museum.

Tour Wellington Caves, where the underground temperature is a constant 16°C and the caves are decorated with fossils and formations.

Hire a canoe or a boat and explore Lake Burrendong and visit the Arboretum and Botanic Gardens.

Have a drink or dinner at Wellington's Lion of Waterloo Hotel, the oldest hotel west of the Blue Mountains.

above left to right: Windmills, Blayney (Zenio Lapka); Cathedral Caves in Wellington (Gecko Photographics); Hot air balloon festival, Canowindra.

below: Age of Fishes Museum, Canowindra (Evolving Images)

Noted by explorers for its fine agricultural and grazing potential, this area came to prominence with the gold rushes of the 1850s and '60s.

Wellington

Just under 100 km north of Orange on the Mitchell Highway, Wellington is a classic country service centre with a rich history.

Just north of town, the Lion of Waterloo Hotel, built in 1842 as a Cobb & Co. staging post, was the venue of Australia's last known duel in 1854. A Heritage Trail map outlining this and other sites of interest is available at the visitor information centre.

Wellington Caves and phosphate mine
Wellington's limestone caves are remarkable for their coral and stalagmites and stalactites as well as for the largest deposit of Plio Pleistocene mammal fossils in Australia. Fragments of marsupial bone and teeth can be seen all over the cave.

The Cathedral Cave contains Altar Rock and boasts Australia's largest stalagmite, measuring 15 m high and 32 m around the base. Tours of the nearby phosphate mine reveal how local investors were duped by mine owners into pouring their money into a mine that yielded little commercial value. The mine has been restored by volunteer labour and is wheelchair accessible.

Around Wellington

Within 30 minutes' drive of Wellington, Lake Burrendong is a popular spot for

picnicking, camping and water sports. The Burrendong Arboretum and Botanic Garden overlook the lake and preserve more than 2,500 species of native plants. Don't miss the fern gully, a cool oasis of rainforest plants. You can also buy rare plants not available in commercial nurseries.

About 15 km south is Stuart Town, a former gold town that lays claim to being the inspiration for Australian poet A. B. (Banjo) Paterson's 'Man from Ironbark'. Here visitors can pan for gold or fossick through mullock heaps.

Cabonne Country

The Cabonne countryside boasts farm-gate sales of berries, figs, chestnuts, hazelnuts, olives, honey, apples and stone fruit, justifying the area's reputation as the food basket of NSW.

Molong

Molong, 35 km north of Orange on the Mitchell Highway, is a thriving rural town. Explore the historic main street or take a break in one of the town's lush parks, which overlook Molong Creek. Molong has a number of B&Bs and is a great place to base yourself.

Canowindra

Some 60 km south of Orange, Canowindra is a pretty town built on the rich alluvial flats of the Belubula River. It has a heritage-listed main street and a burgeoning wine trade. It also has a thriving hot-air balloon industry: the



stable atmospheric conditions make this an ideal place to take to the skies for a dawn flight.

Visitors will enjoy the Age of Fishes Museum, which displays evidence of an extensive 360-million-year-old fossil bed containing the remains of more than 3,500 freshwater fish. Don't miss the many antique stores, boutiques and art galleries in Canowindra.

Cabonne Country is home to a number of historic towns, all within an easy drive of Orange. Borenore, a rich farming village where visitors will find it hard to resist stopping at farm-gate stalls; Cargo, Cumnock and Cudal – thriving villages all within 25 minutes drive of Orange; Eugowra – a bushranger town; Manildra – home to Australia's longest running movie theatre; and Yeoval – Banjo Paterson Country.

Blayney

Blayney, 35 km south of Orange, is a historic town with a contemporary cast on rural life – a wind farm. From a platform at the Interpretive Centre at Carcoar Dam, visitors can see the 45m tall windmills. Compared to electricity from coal fire, these 15 turbines save 8,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year.

Millthorpe

In this National Estate-registered town, 22 km south of Orange, sample local produce at one of the many restaurants. Team it with a Cowra chardonnay or one of Orange's cool-climate cabernets, pinots or merlots.

Carcoar

Established in 1839 and 52 km south-west of Bathurst, Carcoar is best explored on foot. Grab a map from the visitor information centre and discover the convict-built Stoke Stable Museum and the Carmanhurst Military Museum.

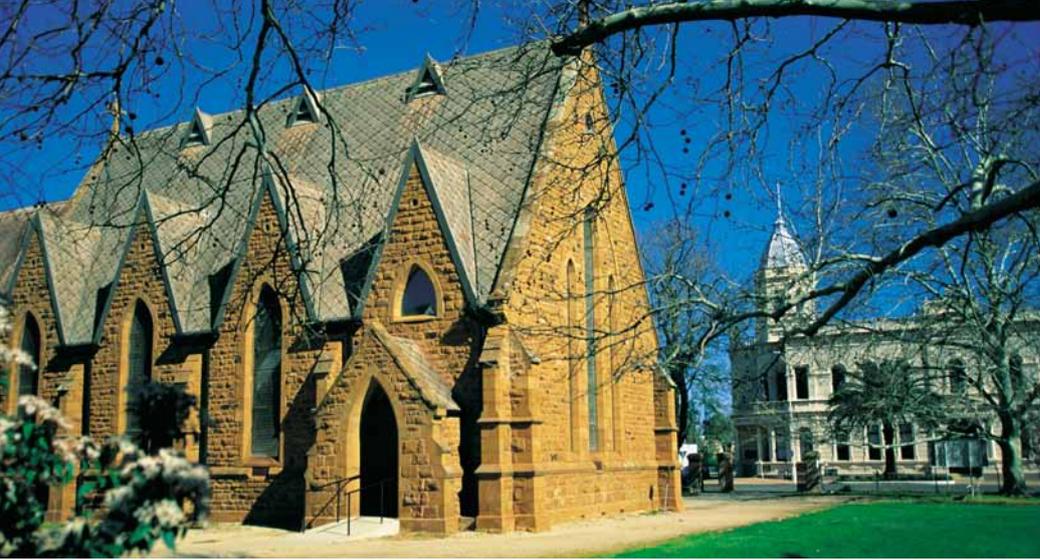


For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Wellington Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 621 614

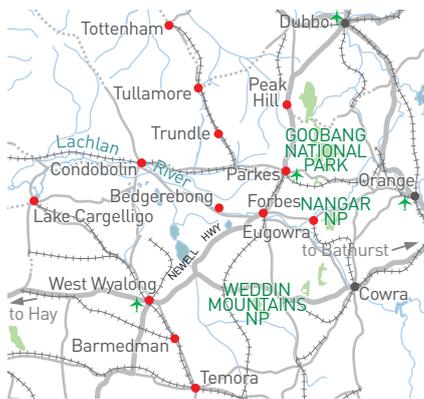
Canowindra Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6344 1008





Parkes and surrounds

With genuine welcomes, the towns of Parkes, Forbes, West Wyalong and Condobolin will give you a true sense of what 'country' is all about.



MUST SEE AND DO

Play bushranger at Escort Rock near Eugowra, where Frank Gardiner's gang staged Australia's biggest gold heist.

Pack your binoculars and head out to Lake Cowal for a night of camping and early morning birdwatching.

Plan a camping or caravanning and fishing trip along the Lachlan River, from Forbes to Lake Cargelligo.

Explore the gold mine at Peak Hill, then drive to Goobang National Park to see the animal species found in the largest forest and woodland remnant in the Central West.

above left to right: Old church in Forbes (Don Fuchs); Henry Parkes sculpture, Parkes (Parkes Shire Council); Forbes Chinese Memorial Garden (Don Fuchs); CSIRO Radio Telescope, Parkes.

Parkes

A four-hour drive west of Sydney, Parkes experienced a brief but spectacular boom during the gold rush before it matured as the centre of a rich agricultural district. It is now famous as the home of 'The Dish' and the much-loved Parkes Elvis Festival held in January each year.

Attractions around Parkes

The town's most celebrated attraction is the CSIRO Parkes Radio Telescope. The star of the film *The Dish*, the observatory's giant radio telescope measures radio energy naturally emitted by distant quasars, galaxies, molecular clouds and pulsars to generate 'images'. When Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon, most of the television images broadcast to the world were received by The Dish. In the shadow of the telescope, the visitors centre has displays and interactive exhibits that explain the workings of the radio telescope as well as the principles of astronomy. The Dish Café is perfect for a break.

At the northern gateway to Parkes, the Pioneer Park Antique Machinery Museum pays tribute to the inventive agricultural machines that have tamed the sprawling plains.

The Alpaca Country Shop, 10 km south of Parkes, offers a close look at the 'intellectuals' of the wool-bearing world. There's also a café, and a shop selling a complete range of alpaca- and merino-wool products.

On the outskirts of Parkes, Tyndall's Lavender Farm invites you to take a stroll through the wave-like mounds of the lavender gardens and learn how oils are extracted from this aromatic plant. To the east, Goobang National Park,

which nurtures more than 450 plant species as well as 13 rare and endangered animal species, has camping facilities and lookouts.

Peak Hill

North of Parkes, along the Newell Highway, the historic gold mine at Peak Hill offers a look at open-cut mining operations. Essentially a self-guided tour, the mine has a series of marked trails with viewing platforms overlooking the five pits. But before you visit, check the opening times, as they vary depending on the season.

Forbes

A 30-minute drive south of Parkes along the Newell Highway, the town of Forbes, on the banks of the Lachlan River, has a fine blend of handsome historic buildings, parks and gardens. Pick up a Forbes Heritage Trail brochure from the visitor information centre and explore the town on a self-guided walking tour.

Bushranger tales

In the main street of Forbes, the lavish Albion Hotel has a basement with the remains of the tunnel system that connected the hotel (formerly the local Cobb & Co. office) with the town's banks. To foil bushrangers, gold was transported through the tunnels. The cellar also houses the Bushrangers Hall of Fame Museum, which tells the fascinating tale of the notorious locals who once operated on the wrong side of the law.

The biggest gold robbery in Australia's history took place at Eugowra, near Forbes, in 1862, when Frank Gardiner and his gang – which included Ben Hall – robbed the mail coach of 2,719 oz of gold. Three years later, Hall was shot by police about 20 km north-west of Forbes. His grave can be found in the local



cemetery. A colourful brochure on the life and times of Ben Hall is available from the Forbes Visitor Information Centre.

Calling all birdwatchers

Located 4 km south of Forbes on the Newell Highway, the Gum Swamp Bird Hide is the place to see some of the 158 bird species that inhabit this wetland sanctuary.

West Wyalong

Situated at the intersection of the Newell and Mid Western highways, West Wyalong was founded on profits mined from the surrounding goldfields. The town has a number of imposing public buildings, such as the Wyalong Courthouse, easily identified by its cupola, spire and distinctive semicircular windows. The town's Main Street also reflects its pioneering history, following the course of the original bullock track that curved around the gold diggings. It's sometimes called 'the Crooked Mile'.

Forged by gold

West Wyalong pays tribute to its gold-mining history with parks and museums that add a thrilling dimension for the visitor. West Wyalong's Bland District Historical Museum has a remarkable collection of photographs, which document the gold-mining history of the region, as well as exhibits of local industrial, domestic and Aboriginal artefacts.

The Cooina Bushland Reserve has an exact replica of the 25m poppet head of the True Blue Gold Mine. This is also a fine spot for a picnic.

Aboriginal history

Just 36 km north of West Wyalong, Lake Cowal is the largest natural lake in the State. Covering 233 sq km, this vast, shallow

waterway is an important breeding ground for waterfowl. Stone artefacts recovered from the lake's shores suggest that it once supported a large population of the local Wiradjuri people.

When travelling in the region, keep an eye out along the river banks for scarred and carved trees, used to mark burial sites. You can also look for middens on the lake shore.

The West Wyalong Local Aboriginal Land Council Arts and Crafts shop has excellent souvenirs – including tools, paintings, T-shirts and a range of beauty products made from native Australian plants – all handcrafted by the Wiradjuri people.

Lake Cargelligo

The region's lakes and rivers will capture your eye as well as your heart. Situated south-west of Condobolin, Lake Cargelligo is one of the region's surprises. Spread across 30 sq km, the lake is an outback oasis – an aquatic playground for power-boating, yachting, fishing, waterskiing and swimming. The exceptional bird life here includes mallee fowl, pelicans, swans, ducks, geese and the rare bower bird and black cockatoo. The caravan park is an ideal base for making the most of the lake.

Ten kilometres north of Lake Cargelligo, the Murrin Bridge vineyard has produced Australia's first Aboriginal-grown wine.

Condobolin

Australian Idol singer Shannon Noll grew up in Condobolin. He draws inspiration for his songwriting from the vast sprawling plains and the true-blue Aussie bush characters of his hardworking home town.

Manna Mountain, about 70 km from Condobolin, is sacred to the Wiradjuri people. Its rocks are inscribed with the indentation where they once sharpened their hunting tools and implements.

Country drives

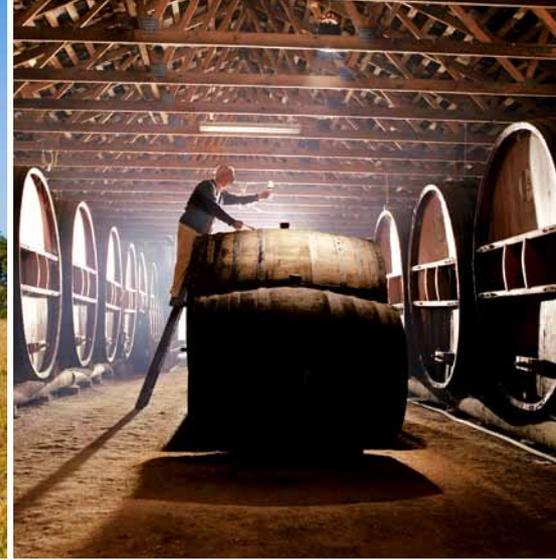
Discover the magnitude of the great open spaces on a country drive. West of Condobolin, Gum Bend Lake provides 40 hectares of parklands and picnic areas.

Travelling north-west from Parkes on the Bogan Way, you'll enjoy a quiet and classic slice of country NSW that's ideal for caravanners. There's much to savour along this route, including Bogan Gate, where Harry 'Breaker' Morant spent much of his life; Trundle, boasting the widest main street in the State; Tullamore, a merino heartland; and Tottenham, which is close to the State's geographic centre. From here head north-west from West Wyalong on the Harvest Loop from Tullibigeal – Tulli to the locals – to Lake Cargelligo and south to Rankins Springs. You'll get a sense of the grand open vistas that bring the heart of NSW to life.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsnw.com or contact

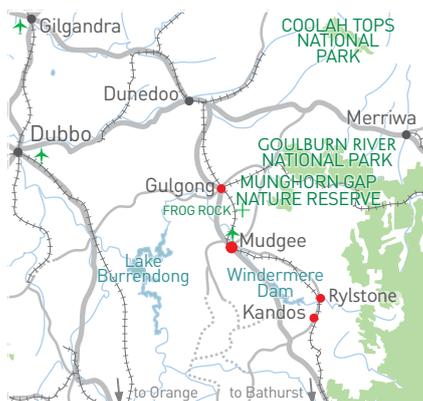
Parkes Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 624 365

Forbes Railway Arts & Tourist Centre
on (02) 6852 4155



Mudgee region and towns

Founded in the wild days of the gold rush and now renowned for its excellent food, wine and café culture, Mudgee is as good as the country gets.



A priceless past

Mudgee takes its name from an Aboriginal word meaning 'a nest in the hills', and the name suits this handsome wine-growing town in the valley of the Cudgegong River. Situated 265 km north-west of Sydney, Mudgee is the centre of a region of amazing variety and vitality. Horse and cattle studs share the district's fertile soils with vineyards and prosperous fine-wool sheep properties. Recently, the region has diversified into olive growing and olive oil production.

Mudgee sprang to life during the gold rush, and several of its buildings date from the 1850s and '60s. Along with a burgeoning café culture and its historic attributes, Mudgee has an air of tranquillity that makes it a delightful place for a stroll.

Mudgee and its surrounding villages are a great place to browse for antiques. Pick up an Antique Trail brochure from the visitor information centre in Mudgee's Market Street, make sure the boot is empty and hit the trail in search of treasure.

On the track

While you're at the visitor information centre, you can also collect a copy of the Wallaby Track brochure, a guide to Henry Lawson's village of Eurunderee, which lies just on the outskirts of town.

Lawson lived on the road that now bears his name between the ages of about 6 months and 15 years. The Wallaby Track drive takes in various sites associated with Lawson and his

writing, including the old Eurunderee School, the Henry Lawson Memorial, the Budgee Budgee Inn, Sapling Gully, Golden Gully and the site of the Albury Pub, which was owned by Lawson's grandfather.

Mudgee region wines

Vineyards were established as early as the 1850s and these play an ever-increasing part in Mudgee life. The local wines are robust and deeply coloured, with cabernet sauvignon, shiraz and full-bodied chardonnays being the signature wines.

The region has close to 50 wineries, including some organic ones, and most are open for tastings and cellar-door sales. Maps of the wineries listing opening hours are available from the Mudgee Visitor Information Centre.

Fresh food

Mudgee, long known for its honey, is also becoming renowned for its farmhouse cheeses, including a delicious pesto-infused feta, and quality produce such as extra virgin olive oils. Farmers' markets held on the third Saturday of each month are a must for foodies.

Country style

If small and atmospheric is your preferred style of accommodation, the region around Mudgee has a wealth of historic guesthouses, country houses for hire, cosy B&Bs and purpose-built accommodation with every modern luxury. Many of these are located in superb settings, so choose from wilderness and wallabies out the window, a view over vineyards or a sublime outlook over Mudgee itself.

MUST SEE AND DO

Invite someone special for a wine-tasting weekend, taste wines that you'll only find at a cellar door, hire a bike and take a two-wheel vineyard tour, and enjoy dinner in a vineyard.

Enjoy Mudgee Feta at High Valley Wine and Cheese on Cassilis Road.

Try freshly pressed olive oil straight after the autumn harvest.

Take the back road from Mudgee via Rylstone and experience a taste of the Wollemi wilderness.

Spend a night out under the stars at Dunns Swamp or Windamere Dam.

above left to right: Horseriding at the Arena Horsemanship Centre, Mudgee (Evolving Images); Winemaker, Mudgee (Mike Newling); Cycling at Mt Frome vineyard, Mudgee (Evolving Images); Gulgong Museum (Evolving Images).

below: Dunns Swamp in Wollemi National Park (Evolving Images).



Gulgong

About 30 km north of Mudgee, the town of Gulgong is virtually a living museum. Founded in the heady days of the gold rush, even a short stroll along Gulgong's main street – which includes about 130 buildings with a National Trust classification – reveals the town's history spelled out in the facades, verandahs and elaborate wrought ironwork of the Victorian era.

Henry Lawson Centre houses the largest collection of Lawson's writings and memorabilia outside Sydney's Mitchell Library.

The area is a haven for craftworkers. Gulgong's Cudgegong Gallery has a world-class display of ceramics in a cool, modernist space that stands in stark contrast to the rest of this historic town.

Rylstone and Kandos

On the Cudgegong River, 47 km south-east of Mudgee, Rylstone sits in a magnificent green valley close to the edge of Wollemi National Park. About 30 km east of Rylstone, Dunns Swamp is tailor-made for a range of outdoor activities, from bushwalking and swimming to camping, birdwatching and fishing. Just west of Rylstone, the huge Windamere Dam combines excellent fishing and boating with first-rate caravan and camping facilities.

Kandos is a former shale-mining town and tours of the Glen Davis oil shale site are available on weekends. This rich valley is also known for its produce, including unusual grape varieties such as gewürztraminer and sylvaner.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Mudgee Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 816 304





Wagga Wagga and surrounds

Set among the rolling hills of southern NSW, this diverse area offers a feast of history, art, nature and big-hearted country life.



MUST SEE AND DO

Soak up the legend of the 'Dog on the Tuckerbox' at Gundagai.

Pay homage at a cricketing shrine – Bradman's Birthplace in Cootamundra.

Take a spooky ghost tour of Junee's Monte Cristo.

Reach new heights at the Temora Aviation Museum.

Potter around in antique and craft stores in Coolamon.

Pack a picnic lunch and set out to climb The Rock, 30 km south-west of Wagga Wagga.

above left to right: Chocolate and Licorice Factory, Junee (Paul Foley); Bradman's birthplace, Cootamundra (Riverina Tourism); Monte Cristo historic homestead, Junee (Peter Bellingham; Junee Shire Council); Farm in the Gundagai district (Paul Foley).

below: Fishing at Murrumbidgee River in Gundagai (Paul Foley).

Wagga Wagga

The State's largest inland city, Wagga Wagga is located on the Murrumbidgee River, 470 km south-west of Sydney. The city has a dynamic artistic community and café culture. Here the National Art Glass Gallery boasts a world-class collection of 400 pieces, housed in a stunning building that is modelled on a splinter of glass.

Temora

Temora, 90 minutes' drive east of Griffith, has a marvellous rural museum with an extensive display of working historic agricultural machinery, an antique telephone exchange and a number of reconstructed historic buildings, including a replica of a flour mill. Discover a variety of ex-military aircraft at Temora Aviation Museum.

Lake Centenary, 4 km north of Temora, is a 22-hectare lake with three small islands and a landscaped recreation and viewing area. It is perfect for power-boating, sailing, canoeing, fishing, swimming and picnics.

Cootamundra

The birthplace of Sir Donald Bradman and part of the National Bradman Trail, Cootamundra is located in a picturesque valley. Just one hour north of Wagga Wagga and two hours west of Canberra, it is also the home of the golden Cootamundra wattle, which is particularly beautiful in July and August when it's in full bloom.

Cootamundra attracts both cricketing and museum enthusiasts. There's Bradman's Birthplace Museum, a restored cottage filled with fascinating cricket memorabilia; the Heritage Centre Museum, with its historic displays; and the Captain's Walk, a collection of bronze sculptures of former Australian cricket captains at Jubilee Park.

Play a round of golf on the oldest country golf course in NSW, be entertained by performing artists or discover the area's creativity at the Art & Cultural Centre. Taste the delights of local produce at the visitor centre, set under the iron lace of the historic railway station, and be sure to explore the historic villages of Wallendbeen and Stockinbingal.

Coolamon

The heart of a proud wheat-belt shire located some 40 km north-west of Wagga Wagga, both Coolamon and the local area have several historical museums and displays that provide an insight into rural life. Included on the list are the historic Coolamon Railway Station, the RSL Museum, the Vintage Farm Machinery display, and in nearby Ganmain, the Historical Museum and Hay Interpretive Centre.

The Up-to-Date Store in Coolamon is an example of an early 1900s general emporium. Now a cultural centre and museum, it houses a very rare Lamson Cash Railway System, which takes cash in a metal cannister via a track system from the shop floor to the cashier's office.



Junee

A short drive north of Wagga Wagga on the Olympic Highway, the historic town of Junee is justly proud of its railway heritage. The Roundhouse Rail and Transport Museum has a fascinating display of rolling stock and locomotives. Included in the collection are a working steam crane, a wooden mail van, a breakdown van and the original workshop. The museum is housed in the roundhouse (for turning around locomotives), the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere when it was built in 1947.

Sample the delicious range of goods made by the Junee Licorice & Chocolate Factory, located in the historic Junee Flour Mill.

Gundagai

A historic crossing point on the Murrumbidgee River since colonial times, Gundagai is located 390 km south-west of Sydney on the Hume Highway. The town is the home of the longest wooden bridge built in Australia, the massive 921m Prince Alfred Bridge. Built in 1867, it was designed to withstand even the most severe

flood. Although here the Murrumbidgee River is usually no more than a few metres across, in flood the river expands to vast proportions. In 1852, the river broke its banks and swept away most of the town.

Lockhart

Lockhart's streets feature beautifully restored 19th century facades that have been classified by the National Trust. Rising above the Riverina plain, The Rock is a 360m outcrop that towers above the quiet rural town of the same name.



 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Wagga Wagga Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 100 122

Temora Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6977 1086

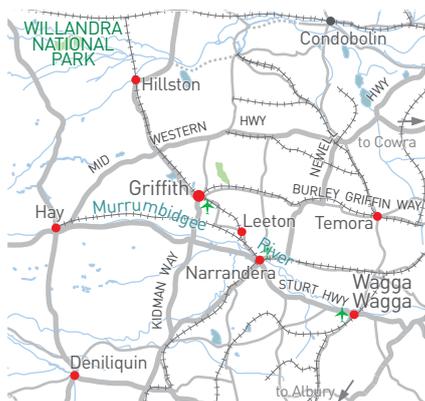
Cootamundra Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 350 203

Gundagai Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6944 0250



Griffith and surrounds

Located in southern NSW, this area is rich in contrasts – from sunburnt plains to an oasis of irrigated pastures, orchards and vineyards.



MUST SEE AND DO

Try your hand at shearing at Shear Outback in Hay.

Take home a bottle of the celebrated Noble One Botrytis Semillon from De Bortoli Wines outside Griffith.

Go birdwatching in the renowned Fivebough Wetlands.

Learn about the merino wool industry at the Peppin Heritage Centre.

Explore the region's natural and pastoral history at Willandra National Park, near Hillston.

Spot some koalas in the Narrandera Nature Reserve.

above left to right: Rice harvesting, Leeton (Central NSW Tourism); Hay shearer (Mike Newling); Wine and cheese at Beelgara Winery in Griffith (Paul Foley); Shear Outback Museum, Hay (Shear Outback).

below: Sheep herding demonstration at 'Shear Outback', Hay (Paul Foley).

Griffith

Located 600 km west of Sydney, the city of Griffith and surrounding areas have been transformed by the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA), a vast scheme that has greened what were once parched Riverina plains. Italian migrants were prominent in the development of Griffith during the early 1900s, and their lasting legacy, apart from agriculture, can be seen in the town's vibrant cafés and restaurants.

Griffith produces about a quarter of Australia's wine. The region is especially known for its botrytis semillon, a fragrant, ambrosial dessert wine. In fact, this is one of the few places in the world that make it. Wineries such as De Bortoli Wines and McWilliams Hanwood Estate are open for cellar-door sales.

Leeton

About 45 minutes south-east of Griffith, Leeton also owes its existence to the MIA. The town features outstanding examples of Art Deco architecture, which was in vogue in the town's early years. Stroll along Kurrajong and Pine avenues where the Roxy Theatre, the Leeton Visitor Information Centre and the Hydro Motor Inn all highlight Leeton's preserved heritage.

Narrandera

At the intersection of the Newell and Sturt highways, Narrandera began as a settlement around the Murrumbidgee River, becoming a

junction for the railway and riverboats in the late 19th century.

Koalas were released in Narrandera in 1972 and have since thrived. The floodplains of the Murrumbidgee River, about 25 km south-east of the Narrandera Nature Reserve, are a great place to see the world's cutest marsupials.

Two kilometres south-east of Narrandera, Lake Talbot is a popular waterskiing, canoeing, boating and fishing spot.

Deniliquin

Set on the Edward River, a small branch of the Murray, and 75 km north of Echuca, Deniliquin is surrounded by State forests, with impressive stands of river red gum.

Visit the Peppin Heritage Centre to discover the region's pastoral history. From this visitor information centre you can collect a Heritage Town map and take a river walk to the Island Sanctuary in the centre of town, where birdlife and kangaroos are plentiful.

Walk over the lagoon on the footbridge to the historic Town Hall and continue on the Heritage Town Walk, which takes in historic bridges and significant heritage buildings.

Hay

Situated on the Murrumbidgee River and surrounded by the Hay plains, at night Hay offers a 360° view of a sky ablaze with stars. During the day, Hay's five museums, including



Shear Outback: The Australian Shearers' Hall of Fame, are great places to meet the local characters and explore the town's history of innovation.

The Dunera Museum tells the remarkable story of the town's three World War II camps, which housed 6,000 inmates, including Italian and Japanese prisoners of war (POWs), from 1940 to 1946.

The most famous POWs were the Dunera Boys, German-Jewish refugees who fled from the Nazis to England on board the *Dunera*, only to be interned in 1940 as enemy aliens.

Visitors can also discover the heritage roses in the hidden garden at Bishops Lodge Historic House, an iron house built in 1888.

Hillston

Located on the banks of the Lachlan River, Hillston provides the perfect setting for rural life. Attractions such as the Hillston Cotton Gin, Red Dust and Paddy Melons Community Gallery and the Hillston Museum showcase the area's rich and diverse agricultural industry.

Willandra National Park is only 64 km north of Hillston and occupies approximately one-eighth of the former Big Willandra Station. Highlights include the 20th century homestead, shearers' quarters and ram shed.

The park also has interpretive walks and motor trails, providing the visitor with an opportunity to experience the beauty and diversity of this vast, semi-arid riverine plains country.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsw.com or contact

Griffith Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 681 141

Leeton Visitors Centre on (02) 6953 6481

Hay Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 307 090

Deniliquin Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 650 712





The Murray River and towns

Take a trip down Australia's greatest river to discover a slower pace and enjoy diverse landscapes, glorious sunsets and life's rich flavours.



MUST SEE AND DO

Taste the produce of the Murray 'food bowl' by dining at one of the Murray's famous restaurants. Or time your visit for 'Chefs of the Murray'.

Take a paddle-steamer cruise. As long as there is navigable water in the river, regular cruises depart from Albury, Echuca-Moama, Swan Hill and Mildura.

Hire a houseboat from Echuca-Moama, Mildura, Wentworth or Swan Hill and tour the river at your own pace.

Relive the past by visiting some of the historic homesteads and museums along the way.

above left to right: Waterside dining in Swan Hill (Rob Blackburn); Kayaking on the Murray River (Rob Blackburn); Swirl and sample a noble Murray wine; Emmylou paddle steamer on the Murray River (Rob Blackburn).

River of life

The Murray River flows from a tiny spring in Kosciuszko National Park and travels more than 2,500 km before it enters the Southern Ocean in South Australia. Along the way, the stream turns into a mighty river, forming a rich agricultural region as well as the border between NSW and Victoria.

Life on the Murray, with its calm, meandering flow, is never rushed, and you can choose from a great range of laid-back holidays – alpine or outback, city or bush – with cosmopolitan or country-style service.

Albury Wodonga and towns

In the Albury Wodonga region, a journey down the Murray begins in the Australian Alps with the winter ski slopes and whitewater rafting on the river at Khancoban. Once you reach the twin cities of Albury Wodonga, you'll find a thriving arts culture: the Albury Regional Art Gallery boasts one of Australia's finest photographic collections, and you might also catch a performance by the Flying Fruit Fly Circus – a talented troupe of home-grown young acrobats with an international reputation.

Lake Hume, 15 km east of Albury Wodonga, is one of Australia's most remarkable engineering feats. Completed in 1936, it now has the capacity to hold six times the volume of Sydney Harbour. Cycle, hike or horse-ride along the High Country Rail Trail, a 50 km recreational trail along the shores of a lake that crosses six waterways.

Visit the Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre, in Bonegilla, 15 km east of Wodonga. Between 1947 and 1971 more than 320,000 migrants passed through the barracks. Today an interpretive centre at the only surviving block of huts tells their story through photographs and a 'listening wall'.

Venture 50 km west of Wodonga to the celebrated wine district of Rutherglen and discover why the region's muscats have earned world-wide recognition.

Stop at Corowa, half an hour west of Albury, where the seeds for the federation of the Australian states were planted. The Corowa Federation Museum fills in all the details. While you're in town, book a glider joyride or tandem skydive.

West of Albury Wodonga

The Murray flows through the townships of Yarrowonga-Mulwala, Cobram-Barooga, Numurkah, Nathalia and Barham, creating stretches of sandy beach.

Thompson's Beach at Cobram-Barooga is considered Australia's largest inland beach, and skiers, fisherfolk and birdwatchers happily share Lake Mulwala.

The Barmah Wetlands on the river between Tocumwal, Deniliquin and Echuca are home to almost 900 species of wildlife. These wetlands are within the Barmah-Millewa Forest, the world's largest natural stand of river red gums. Here you'll also find more than 180 Aboriginal sacred sites.



Echuca-Moama

The twin towns of Echuca-Moama are home to the world's largest river boat fleet, moored at the historic red gum wharf. The arrival of the railway in 1864 turned Echuca into Australia's largest inland port, and in its heyday there were more than 80 pubs serving the thirsty river traffic. You can still dine in some.

Jerilderie

An hour's drive north-east of Deniliquin is Jerilderie, where bushranger Ned Kelly and his gang locked up the local constabulary in 1879, then robbed a hotel and bank. Both towns offer farmstay holidays.

Wentworth and Mildura

Irrigation is the lifeblood of Mildura's orchards and vineyards. In the 1890s William Benjamin and George Chaffey introduced irrigation to Renmark and Mildura, and opened up the Mallee Country along the Murray to agriculture. Follow the self-guided Chaffey Trail to sites that celebrate the achievements of these Canadian brothers.

Mildura's other must-visit spots include the Mildura Arts Centre, the Langtree Hall Museum and the RAAF Museum.

The Darling River joins the Murray at Wentworth, an old river port about 33 km downstream from Mildura. Pick up a map from the visitor information centre and see the historic points of interest, such as the Old

Wentworth Gaol and the dry-docked PS *Ruby*, a community restoration project in Fotherby Park. Take the short trip out of town to the Perry Sandhills, majestic sweeps of red sand created by wind erosion over thousands of years.

Boundary Bend, 100 km south-east of Mildura, is located at the point where the Murrumbidgee joins the Murray River. It is the home of Australia's largest olive grove, producing almost a third of the nation's extra-virgin olive oil. You'll be able to sample the fruits of this industry on the plates created by Mildura's legendary chef, Stefano de Pieri.

While you are in the area, don't miss a guided or self-drive tour to World Heritage-listed Lake Mungo National Park, where for thousands of years winds have carved sand dunes and incredible formations known as the Walls of China.

The remains of Mungo Man and Mungo Woman – just two of the many fascinating archaeological finds uncovered at the lake – are part of the rich Aboriginal heritage of this site, which dates back more than 60,000 years. While the burial sites are protected and not available for viewing, you can take an interpretive tour of the Willandra Lakes area, including Lake Mungo National Park, with indigenous tour operators. The sunset tours are spectacular.

Swan Hill, 150 km south-east of Mildura, is a popular holiday town on the Murray. Its Pioneer Settlement Museum re-creates a

riverside port town of the paddle-steamer era. The town hosts an annual steam and vintage vehicle festival.

Make sure you allow enough time to visit the Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum, the Nalder Photographic Studio and the excellent Swan Hill Regional Art Gallery.

Golf on the Murray

There are more than 30 golf courses along the river, so it's a simple matter to arrange a touring holiday with a daily game of golf.

Australian golf champion Stuart Appleby hails from the Murray town of Cohuna. 'The Murray River is a true sporting playground,' he says. 'It's home to some of the best golf courses and a great variety of sporting activities. I am honoured to promote these opportunities nationally and internationally and am thrilled to see the golf clubs working together to ensure a bright future.'

In the pink

At Mourquong, around 15 km from Mildura on the NSW side, the Sunsalt Corporation is making a big name for itself with the pink Murray River salt flakes, a must-have accessory on restaurant tables across Australia.

Sunsalt has three salt mines that source the product by tapping into saline aquifers 30 m below the ground. The colour comes from carotene, which occurs in algae growing in the salty water. By diverting the salty water



that would otherwise drain into the Murray, the company is saving 200 tonnes of salt from entering the river system every day, thus making a small but significant contribution to improving water quality in the Murray.

Steaming ahead

These days there are more than 30 paddleboats plying the river for regular cruises or charter, and Alby and his family operate three of them into Mildura from their base at Buronga on the NSW side of the bridge.

At just 18, Alby's son Chris became the youngest paddleboat captain in the river's history, and today he shares his family's history as he guides guests up the river on the *PS Rothbury* (1881), *PV Melbourne* (1912) and *PS Mundoo* (1987).

The first steam-powered boats appeared on the river in 1853, and until the 1880s, when railways made an impact, many inland regions depended on the paddle-steamers to transport wool to market as well as supplies to the stations. In its heyday, in 1872, the river was a veritable highway, with 240 paddle-steamers operating along its course.

Flagged for attention

You'll see several different versions of the Murray River flag flying on the river, but they all have the Union Jack in the top corner and a red cross with five stars, representing the five colonies that existed when the flag was first flown in the 1880s. Blue stripes are common too, and are said to represent the four major rivers of the Murray–Darling Basin – the Murray, the Murrumbidgee, the Lachlan and the Darling.

In the upper Murray, the bands are dark blue and represent the darker waters of the upper reaches. Downstream, the bands are lighter, indicating the change in water colour as you travel closer to the mouth of the river.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Albury Visitor Information Centre
on 1300 242 879

Wentworth Visitor Information Centre
on (03) 5027 5080

MUST SEE AND DO

Go on a wine-tasting tour at one of the many wineries along the river – choose from boutique cellars and long-established producers.

Admire the wonder of the 600-year-old Murray River red gums lining the banks and wetland regions.

Watch pleasure and working boats navigate the locks that regulate the river's flow and water levels.

above left to right: Perry Sandhills, Wentworth (Rob Blackburn); Stefano's Cellar Door and Bar in Swan Hill (Rob Blackburn).

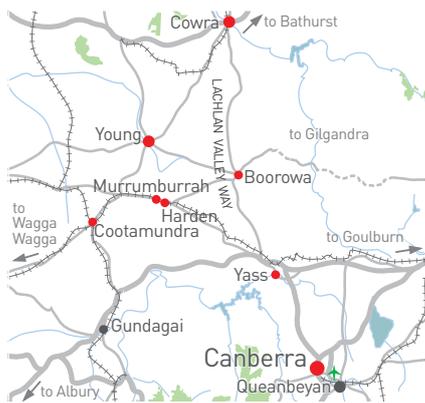
opposite: Children on the Murray River (Rob Blackburn).





Young, Harden and Boorowa

The rolling landscapes of south-west NSW enfold the shires of Young, Harden and Boorowa, welcoming you to a golden past and a fertile present.



MUST SEE AND DO

Pick your own cherries or take a tour during the cherry harvest, from late November through December.

Visit cellar doors in the Hilltops area and taste premium cool-climate wines.

Learn about the old days at the Laming Flat Museum in Young's former Public School, built in 1883.

Visit the Chinese Tribute Gardens at Chinaman's Dam, constructed in the 1860s by two Dutch brothers to sluice their claim. Bring a picnic or barbecue and relax near the Pool of Tranquillity.

above left to right: Young Town Hall (Holly Bradford; Capital Country Tourism); Cherries grown at Willayoung Orchard near Young (Holly Bradford; Capital Country Tourism); Glenara Gallery, Boorowa (Holly Bradford; Capital Country Tourism); Young Chinese Tribute Gardens (Holly Bradford; Capital Country Tourism).

below: Canola fields in Harden (Paul Foley).

Young

Located on the Olympic Highway, 49 km from Cootamundra and 71 km from Cowra, Young has a pivotal position in Australian history due to events that took place on the local goldfields during the 1860s. This is also the heart of Australia's cherry-growing area, which achieves visual perfection from late September to early October when the district's cherry orchards are in blossom. The region produces more than half of the nation's cherry crop, with about 600,000 cases shipped out each season.

Activity in the orchards reaches fever pitch from mid-November until the end of March, when first the cherries and, later, other stone fruit are harvested. Some orchards offer pick-your-own and packing-shed tours, but you can also buy premium-quality stone fruit, apples, pears, strawberries and figs at roadside stalls. The district is renowned for growing plums for prunes; for crops, such as barley, oats, canola and mustard; and for sheep, pigs and cattle for meat, hides and wool.

Young is also the centre of the emerging Hilltops wine-producing region. Four cellar doors offer tastings of their premium reds (including cabernet sauvignon and shiraz) and whites such as riesling, chardonnay and semillon. Italian varieties such as sangiovese and barbera are being trialled too.

Young's gold rush

Gold put a sparkle in everyone's eyes in the 1860s when an estimated 20,000 miners flocked

to the fields around Young, or Laming Flat as it was then known. Settled in 1826, it was called Laming Flat by the locals, who thought the country was ideal for laming ewes.

You can learn about the colourful and sometimes turbulent gold-mining era with a visit to the Laming Flat Museum on Campbell Street. The displays include many mining artefacts, including the Roll-Up banner, a variant on the Eureka flag. Other exhibits include a display of fashion garments from 1854 and items from the old Young Gaol.

Harden-Murrumburrah

Established during the gold rushes of the 1850s, the town of Harden-Murrumburrah, on the Burley Griffin Way, 35 km south-east of Young, is the centre of a thriving fruit, livestock and grain-farming community.

A visit to the Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Museum provides an insight into the twin towns' importance as a railway centre in the 1870s and '80s. The museum displays a traditional oak and brass railway refreshment room, a blacksmith and wheelwright shop, tools, farming equipment and a dentist's surgery from the pioneering era.

Australian Light Horse

A bronze statue, fountain and war-scene diorama in the Murrumburrah end of town commemorate the fact that the first call-up to what would become the Australian Light Horse brigade occurred in the town in 1894. Harden-



Murrumburrah remained a strong contributor to the mounted unit from the Boer War until World War II. You can also see Australia's tallest true obelisk, the 14.1m Federation Star, which celebrates Australia as a nation.

Boorowa

Boorowa is 66 km north-east of Yass on the Lachlan Valley Way. According to local lore, in the mid-19th century a nun was asked if she had visited Ireland. She replied, 'No, but I have been to Boorowa.' A large number of ex-convicts, many of them Irish political prisoners and, later, settlers fleeing the Irish potato famine, formed the basis of the town's first labour force.

These pioneers laid the foundations of today's thriving fine merino- and grain-producing community, and gave the town a strong Celtic character. Today Boorowa enjoys a twin-town relationship with Clonoulty in Ireland, and these connections are celebrated in the Irish Woolfest, held annually in October. Among its highlights is 'The Running of the Sheep', a street event where sheep lead a colourful parade.

The Shamrock Trail

Visitors can follow the Shamrock Trail and see the dairy (1854); the Mechanics Institute (1883); the dynamite store of Webb and Crego, held up by bushranger Ben Hall in 1863; and the Model Store. Here you'll find a fine example of an early 20th century country emporium, as department stores were then known.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitnsw.com or contact

Young Visitor Information Centre on 1800 628 233

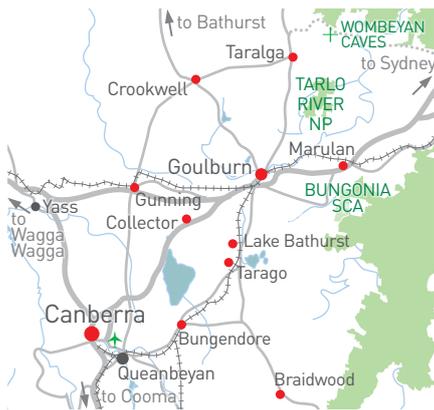
Boorowa Courthouse Arts & Crafts Co-op Visitor Centre on (02) 6385 3885





Goulburn and Crookwell

Within an easy drive of Sydney and Canberra, this area offers a thrilling sense of history and a breathtaking range of outdoor pursuits.



MUST SEE AND DO

Experience the subterranean wonders of Wombeyan Caves, a one-hour drive north-east of Goulburn.

Discover the Bushranger Hotel in Collector, where Ben Hall once taunted the local law from a window of the hotel and fellow rogue Johnny Dunn shot Constable Nelson.

Head out to Wakefield Park racing circuit, 10 km south of Goulburn, for a 'No Speed Limit Day', either in your own vehicle or behind the wheel of a V8 Supercar.

above left to right: The Big Merino, Goulburn (Sara Fife; Capital Country Tourism); Paragon Café, Goulburn (Paul Livingstone; Capital Country Tourism); Canoeing on Marsden Weir, Goulburn (Sara Fife; Capital Country Tourism); The historic Kenmore Hospital, Goulburn (Don Fuchs; Capital Country Tourism).

Goulburn

Goulburn is set amid rich pastures in the Southern Tablelands, about 200 km south-west of Sydney. Explore the district's caves and deep river gorges, or go for a leisurely drive and sample fine local wine and good food in one of the local towns or villages.

Living history

As Australia's first inland city, Goulburn is full of historic churches, public buildings and homes, all architectural testaments to the wealth generated by the wool industry. Pick up a brochure from the visitor information centre and take a self-guided heritage walking tour.

The imposing Italianate Goulburn Post Office and Courthouse were designed by noted colonial architect James Barnet. Next door, the original Town Hall was built in the Classic Revival style of E. C. Manfred, while St Saviour's Cathedral, another of the city's architectural highlights, is in the Victorian Gothic style of Edmund Blacket. The white sandstone interior is splendid, with magnificent stained-glass windows, sculptures, an ornate bishop's throne, side chapels and a 2,200-pipe organ.

Designed by the famous colonial architect Francis Greenway, the Old Goulburn Brewery is the oldest working industrial complex in Australia. The three-storey flour mill was built in 1836, while the brewing tower and malt house were completed in 1840. You can

take either a guided or a self-guided tour and sample traditionally brewed ales.

The railway played a pivotal role in Goulburn's history. Visit the Rail Heritage Centre for a guided tour of the workshops and the 1918 Roundhouse, where veteran locomotives and rolling stock are undergoing restoration.

On the edge of the Wollondilly River, the Georgian era Historic Waterworks Museum houses a four-storey steam-powered beam engine, which was the first pump for the town's water supply in 1883. This impressive mechanical monolith, one of the world's few remaining beam engines in full working order, spins into action once a month. Check with the visitor information centre for operating times.

Historic homesteads

Goulburn and the surrounding district feature many fine colonial properties built by wealthy graziers. Garroorigang Homestead is just one example. Originally the Mulwaree Inn, the 1857 building is now the private home of descendants of the explorer Hamilton Hume. The furniture is original and there are many artefacts from the district's convict and bushranging period.

Peak views

As you explore the area around Goulburn, you'll discover some wonderful landscapes. A short drive east of Goulburn, the highlight of the Bungonia State Conservation Area is Bungonia Gorge, where the Shoalhaven



River has gnawed a huge trough through layers of limestone. With its sheer cliffs and exceptional landforms, this rugged landscape is a favourite destination for cavers, climbers and bushwalkers.

Built to honour locals who fought and died in World War I, the 20m Rocky Hill War Memorial overlooks Goulburn. The gallery at the top of the memorial offers a wonderful panoramic view of the city and beyond. At night the tower is floodlit by a rotating beacon, making it visible many kilometres away.

Walk a country mile

Whether you're a keen walker or a dedicated shopper, you'll enjoy Goulburn's country pace. The 10 km Wollondilly Walking Trail follows the Wollondilly River and links points of scenic, cultural and historical interest. The weekend markets are a wonderful place to shop for country crafts and fresh local produce.

Crookwell

Picturesque Crookwell, 45 km north-west of Goulburn, is surrounded by a number of small and charming villages, such as Binda, Laggan, Grabben Gullen and Taralga, which all boast fascinating histories dating from the gold rush era. Here you can discover a history that includes a cast of convicts, bushrangers, gold-diggers and graziers.

Learn about the shire and pick up some local goods at the visitor centre, go fishing for

trout at Lake Wyangla or throw a line in the local streams where you can also fossick for gold and sapphires.

Local highlights

At a height of 914 m, the tree-lined township of Crookwell has a bracing climate and a spectacular gardening tradition. There are snowfalls most winters, and in spring, massed bulbs burst into life. The changing colours of the leaves also draw visitors from far and wide. When driving through the area, keep an eye out for fresh farm-gate produce such as apples, pears and cherries. At the end of April, some of the town's celebrated private gardens are on show as part of the Open Garden Scheme.

Crookwell is the site of Australia's first commercial, grid-connected Wind Farm. The statuesque 45m turbines can be seen from the viewing area along the Goulburn Road.

Go fishing

The first rainbow and brown trout in Australia were released into the Wollondilly River, near Crookwell, and today the streams are still a great place to try your luck with a fly rod. Pejar Dam, just east of the Goulburn Road, and the Abercrombie River to the north are also prime fishing spots.



For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsw.com or contact

Goulburn Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 353 646

Crookwell Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 4832 1988



Bungendore, Braidwood and Queanbeyan

Bungendore and Braidwood are alive with history and culinary traditions, while the spirited city of Queanbeyan boasts fascinating Victorian streetscapes.



MUST SEE AND DO

Take a ride around Braidwood in a horse-drawn carriage from the Victorian era, available on weekends.

Visit historic Bedervale (1836), just outside Braidwood. One of the finest colonial homesteads in NSW, it also offers B&B accommodation.

Take a walk on the wild side in the forests of Deua National Park, and don't miss the caves.

Araluen, south of Braidwood, is famous for its juicy peaches and other stone fruits – take a trip between mid-November and mid-February.

above left to right: Lark Hill wines (Hamilton Lund); The Old Stone House, Bungendore (Don Fuchs); Bungendore Wood Works Gallery, part of the Poacher's Way; Fishing at Googong Dam (Queanbeyan Visitor Information Centre).

The best of country

Located to the east of Canberra and with a stirring past that was forged in the gold-mining era, this region is tailor-made for anyone who wants to experience authentic country Australia. Eatingwell comes naturally here. These towns all have dining options that adapt to many moods and situations – whether it's a plate of scones still warm from the oven, coffee and cake, an alfresco lunch or a Thai-style dinner for two.

Bungendore

Bungendore, just a 30-minute drive from Canberra at the southern extremity of Lake George, was established in the 1830s when its inn served travellers on the way to Queanbeyan.

Originally a coaching inn, the Carrington of Bungendore has been gloriously restored and now offers stylish food and lodging with both character and comfort.

Art of the country

Despite its modest size, Bungendore has several outstanding galleries, notably the Wood Works Gallery. This award-winning gallery, and its outstanding exhibition of sculpture and fine furniture by leading Australian designers, draws visitors from all over the country as well as from overseas.

Bloomfield Galleries has a brilliant collection of paintings, etchings and drawings by well

known Australian artist Norman Lindsay. The publishing arm of the gallery, Odana Editions, reproduces a range of Lindsay's work, including limited-edition prints, cards, posters and books. Frances Clarice Gallery and X Gallery are always bursting with pottery, jewellery and glass.

Cool climate wines

There are several wineries in the area, including Lark Hill, one of the pioneers of Bungendore's wine-growing industry. Other wineries in the district – including Lambert's, Millimani, Koonaburra, Affleck and Madew Wines – produce chardonnay, semillon blanc, pinot noir, cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, merlot, muscat and riesling.

Braidwood

Braidwood, 100 km to the east of Canberra, was the first town to be listed on the NSW State Heritage register. Today its Georgian town plan and fine array of historic buildings are combined with a thoroughly modern lifestyle.

Heritage listing

Beautiful churches, old-time pubs, restaurants, galleries, craft and antique shops are mixed with traditional businesses that have served the town since the gold rush days. Braidwood is the only town on the east coast that is completely heritage listed. Pick



up a Historic Walk brochure from the visitor information centre, or visit the Braidwood Historical Society Museum, housed in the former Royal Hotel.

Creativity abounds

Braidwood has a thriving art and craft community. Visit the studios of the Pig & Whistle and Sudgets, or any of the other galleries and specialty shops. The highlight of the town's craft calendar is the Airing of the Quilts, held in November, when the balconies along Wallace Street are draped with quilts. The monthly market in Ryrie Park is also a great place to buy craft.

Natural sensations

Deua National Park, to the south of Braidwood, is one of the State's largest natural forests, a wilderness of tall trees and mountain ranges with patches of rainforest. The park is also known for its limestone caves, including the incredible Big Hole, a 100m deep trough. Marble Arch and Wyanbene Caves are nearby and the park offers excellent camping and bushwalking, especially along the Deua River and Oulla Creek to the north-east. It also links to the Monga and Budawang national parks.

Queanbeyan

The bustling, lively city of Queanbeyan was first settled in the 1820s, when sheep were grazed on the Limestone Plains, as the area was then

known. Despite a population of close to 38,000, Queanbeyan has preserved its country-town character. The city has several buildings that date from the middle of the 19th century, so pick up a brochure from the visitor information centre and take a self-guided walking tour.

Declared a village in 1838, Queanbeyan retains many of its old buildings, such as St Benedict's Convent and Byrnes Steam Flour Mill. The Queanbeyan Museum, housed in the former police sergeant's residence, features artefacts from the early history of the district. There is a medical exhibit, machinery shed, period bedroom, kitchen and blacksmith's shop.

The artistic urge

A number of artists have made their home in Queanbeyan, and the city's Arts Trail stitches together its many galleries. Grab a brochure from the visitor information centre and check out the Queanbeyan Art Gallery and The Artists Shed, a working studio and gallery.

By nature's design

Not far from Queanbeyan is a range of natural splendours. Googong Dam, 10 km to the south, is popular for bushwalks, picnics, canoeing, sailing and fishing. The banks of the Molonglo River is another favourite picnic spot, with barbecue facilities and a walking trail with spectacular views into the Molonglo Gorge.

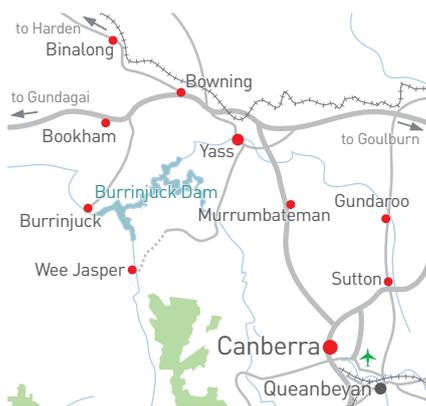
 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsw.com or contact

Queanbeyan Visitor Information Centre
on 1800 026 192



Yass Valley

Within easy reach of Sydney and Canberra, the Yass Valley is a rich rural tapestry overlaid with wineries, natural wonders and vibrant villages brimming with character.



MUST SEE AND DO

Pack a fishing rod and spend a night at Burrinjuck State Recreation Area.

Hike along the Hume and Hovell Walking Track. There are some delightful sections in the river valleys south-west of Yass.

Enjoy a weekend of wining and dining along the Poacher's Trail.

Feast your senses on spring flowers and foliage at Yass Valley Open Gardens event.

Pack a tent or pull a caravan, and take a slow drive through gloriously rugged countryside, from Yass to Wee Jasper.

above left to right: Cooma cottage; Dining in the heart of Canberra's wine district (Don Fuchs); **above left to right:** The historic Red Globe Inn B&B (Don Fuchs); Take a wine cellar and tasting tour (Don Fuchs).

Yass

Located just off the Hume Highway, 280 km south-west of Sydney, Yass was recognised for its sheep-farming potential early in the 19th century. The town has an evocative history that stretches back to the earliest days of Australian settlement.

A glimpse of the past

Built in 1835 and located on the Yass Valley Way, Cooma Cottage was the home of Hamilton Hume, one of Australia's greatest explorers, between 1839 and 1873. It was Hume who added the Palladian-style wings and the Greek Revival portico. Adjacent to the cottage is a particularly fine, mid-19th century stable. Cooma Cottage is now a National Trust museum with an outstanding exhibition on the life and achievements of Hamilton Hume.

The Yass and District Museum provides an authoritative framework for understanding the history of this great Australian agricultural district, detailing the history of Yass from the pre-colonial period, with a major focus on the wool industry. Parallels is an intriguing photographic exhibition that contrasts the main thoroughfare, Comur Street, as it was in 1895 with the way it is today.

Treasures from another era

Ross's Relics is a vast emporium of 14 shops brimming with assorted treasures, from bric-à-brac to large antiques. An Aladdin's Cave for collectors, Ross's is located on Comur Street and is open every day.

Just 37 km north-west of Yass, Binalong Motor Museum is the only purpose-built motor museum and automotive restoration workshop in the country. The museum provides an opportunity to see precious vehicles, including a Bugatti and a Lotus Elite, as well as rare Ducati and Norton motorcycles. The restoration workshop is part of the museum, and there are picnic and barbecue facilities on the premises.

Local arts and crafts

Peter Crisp is a distinguished glassworker who runs a gallery in a glorious 3-hectare garden on the Hume Highway, 14 km south of Yass. The garden consists of a series of 'rooms', with themes ranging from formal plantings of lavender and flowering trees to informal gardens, with seasonal delights year-round.

Located in the pretty village of Bowning, 12 km north-west of Yass, the Big Sky Gallery sells unique and eclectic arts and crafts, including hand-crafted and custom-made jewellery, leather work, sculpture, photography, glassware, paintings and also varieties of honey.

At Binalong's Southern Cross Glass, visitors can watch skilled glassblowers at work.

The great country break

Between Yass and Canberra there are more than 15 wineries producing some 2 million bottles annually. Low-fertility soils, cold crisp winters, hot summers and mild autumn days combine to create ideal wine-making



conditions that produce wines with intense fruit character.

The Poacher's Trail is a self-guided driving route that links country cafés, wineries, art galleries and charming B&Bs as it threads through Yass Valley. For anyone looking for a great country break, this is it – a combination of great country food, warm and welcoming hospitality and cool-climate wines.

Charming accommodation

Binalong's Old Royal Guesthouse is country charm personified – a classic two-storey crossroads hotel with good food, fine accommodation and a bookshop on the premises. The guesthouse is also the home of the Stable EcoProject, a resource centre with practical examples of passive solar control and natural ventilation designed to reduce energy consumption, all presented in a fascinating display.

Natural attractions

South-west of Yass, at the foot of the majestic Brindabella Ranges near the village of Wee Jasper, Carey's Cave has magical galleries of colourful limestone formations contained in seven principal chambers. Discovered in 1875 by John Carey, the caves hit the headlines in 1957 when the spine of a large extinct wombat was discovered. The chambers, pathways and stairs are illuminated, and guided tours operate on weekends and public holidays (there are more tours during NSW school holidays).

Ringed by forests and mountain peaks that soar to almost 1000 m, the vast blue waters of Burrinjuck Dam offer superb trout fishing and boating. Located 57 km south-west of Yass at the western edge of the dam, Burrinjuck State Recreation Area is a haven for campers, holiday-makers (on-site vans, flats and cottages are available) and picnickers. It's a favourite spot for waterskiing, boating and hiking, with walking tracks leading to lookouts with views as far as the Brindabella Ranges, west of Canberra. Wildlife is abundant – tame rosellas and kangaroos visit the recreation area every morning and evening.

Historic trail

The Hume and Hovell Walking Track follows the route that these now famous explorers took on their historic 1824 journey. Starting at Yass, the 440-km track heads in a southerly direction, passes through Wee Jasper and winds towards Albury. The entire hike takes about 24 days, but visitors can enjoy many fine shorter walks along the track.

 For more information about accommodation and things to do, go to visitsw.com or contact

Yass Valley Visitor Information Centre
on (02) 6226 2557



Events

January

ClubsNSW Elvis Festival, Parkes
Australia's premier celebration of Elvis Presley's life and music, featuring three days of Elvis concerts, a street parade and an Elvis Gospel Church Service.

January/February

Murray River International Music Festival
More than 50 regional communities along the Murray River present fine international and Australian musicians, showcasing the region's unique food, wine and river environment.

February

Bungendore Country Muster, Bungendore
Incorporating the Australian Bush Ballad Awards, this three-day festival attracts some of Australia's best country music talent.

Australian Blues Music Festival, Goulburn
For more than 10 years, this event has featured the best of the country's established and emerging blues artists.

Riverboats, Jazz, Food and Wine Festival, Echuca-Moama

Enjoy three days and nights of jazz and local and regional food and wine among gum trees on the banks of the Murray River.

March

Opera in the Paddock, Inverell
Opera in the Paddock is an open air, classic music event held annually on the property "Mimosa" Delungra, 25km west of Inverell. Held in a picturesque bush setting the concert commences on dusk and is presented by some of Australia's finest professional singers, a chamber orchestra, a pianist and a conductor.

Rock'n at the Racecourse, Coolah
This Festival of music will be held at the Coolah Recreation Grounds only 3km from town. A feast of live music, entertainment, wildlife displays, stalls for young and old, jumping castle and camping facilities. This is a great family fun day out in the beautiful Coolah Valley.

Crossing the Divide Farming Festival, Trangie
This colourful week-long festival celebrates country living in the Macquarie Valley with a range of agricultural field day, family and sporting events.

John O'Brien Bush Festival, Narrandera
Bush lore, music and humour combine in celebration of the poetry of John O'Brien, the creator of the mythical town of Tangmalangaloo.

Albury Gold Cup race meeting, Albury
High fashion and top-class racing at what is fast becoming Australia's biggest country race meeting. More than 20,000 regularly attend the event.

Barmedman Modified Tractor Pull, Barmedman
Experience the action and grunt of modified tractor pulling as well as freestyle motocross, children's rides and food and market stalls.

April

Bathurst International Motor Festival, Bathurst
All things motorsport converge on Mount Panorama over the Easter period for a festival celebrating the fast and furious. This traditional Easter meeting incorporates demonstrations by cars of all eras.

F.O.O.D. Week, Orange
Celebrating its 15th year, F.O.O.D. Week showcases the hallmark producers, products, chefs, venues and unique enterprises of Orange.

NATFLY @ Temora
The Easter long weekend sees 700 ultra-lights join in the National Ultra-light Fly-in at the historic Temora Aerodrome. Held in conjunction with RAAust (Recreational Aviation Australia Inc.), there are flight demonstrations and more than 50 trade and market stalls.

Forbes Camel Races, Forbes
Held on Good Friday, this event brings together all the fun of a country race meeting and features super-speedy camels, yabbies and guinea pigs. Place your bets and barrack loudly.

Tullamore Irish Festival, Tullamore
Held on the Easter weekend, this celebration of all things Irish features dance, song, Irish fare and brews and the Tullamore Dew Hurdles Cup.

La Festa, Griffith
Held on Easter Sunday, this street party celebrates the city's colourful and dynamic multicultural community and its wine and food industry. The event also brings together a program of exciting world music performers.



above left to right: National Ultra-light Fly-in at Narrromine (Gecko Photographics); Parkes Elvis Festival; F.O.O.D. Week, Orange; Poachers Pantry participates in the Fireside Festival, The Poachers Way.

May

Australian Celtic Festival, Glen Innes

Glen Innes boasts its own tartan and has Gaelic street names and a monument to Australian Celts – a megalithic stone circle – so it's the perfect place for an annual festival celebrating Celtic culture, food, dance and music.

Wagga Gold Cup Festival, Wagga Wagga

A social extravaganza with colourful chariot races down the main street, fashion's Wool Awards, military spectacles and race day fun.

Scone and Upper Hunter Horse Festival, Scone

Two weeks of thoroughbred sales, art shows, rodeos, fireworks and campdrafts culminate in the Scone Cup Race carnival.

June

Henry Lawson Festival of the Arts, Grenfell

Celebrate the romance of the bush with short stories, verse writing, painting and family events that pay tribute to Grenfell's connection with a great Australian writer.

July

Aberdeen Highland Games, Aberdeen

Celebrate Aberdeen's Scottish roots with a day of parades, pipe bands and jousting. See tartan warriors, haggis hauls, a kilted dash and more.

Hats Off to Country Festival, Tamworth

Three fabulous days and nights in Tamworth, Australia's Country Music Capital. 50 artists. 120 hours. 60 shows.

August

Fireside Festival, The Poachers Way, Yass Valley

Run annually throughout August in eight towns and villages within the Capital Country region. Twenty-five separate venues offer a diverse range of events experiences in the theme of firesides, flavours and friends from fireside degustation dinners, wine tastings and master classes, to performances, music recitals, art exhibitions, special menu items and accommodation packages.

September

Sakura Matsuri, Cowra

The Japanese Garden celebrates the Cherry Blossom Festival with traditional Japanese cultural activities, including tea ceremonies and martial arts demonstrations.

Mudgee Wine Celebration, Mudgee

A month-long event showcasing local Mudgee wines and food. A highlight of the program is 'Go Grazing', where wineries and restaurants join forces to present the best of the region's produce.

Irish Woolfest, Boorowa

This festival of Irish music and dance features 'The Running of the Sheep' – about 150 merinos lead the street parade.

Zoo Grooves, Dubbo

This annual music is held in the picturesque grounds of Taronga Western Plains Zoo, the largest tourist attraction in regional NSW. Zoo Grooves is a fun filled day out that offers something for every member of the family, including live music and lots of activities for children such as face painting, craft and animal encounters.

October

Deni Ute Muster, Deniliquin

Deniliquin holds the Guinness Book of Records world title for the most utes ever 'mustered' in one place – more than 5,000!

Orange Wine Week

A chance to sample the varieties grown in the State's highest altitude wine region.

The Spirit of the Land, Lockhart

The Spirit of the Land is unique amongst Australian festivals as it hosts Australia's only National Farm Art Sculpture Awards for sculpture created from recycled farm materials and natural elements of the land. Other attractions include live entertainment, boutique markets and gardens.

November

Airing of the Quilts and Quilt Event, Braidwood

Detailed and colourful handmade quilts adorn every balcony in the main street, making a rich display of traditional and modern handicrafts.

Warbirds Downunder Airshow, Temora

The Warbirds Downunder Airshow is a world class aerobatic airshow of ex-military aircraft that have historical significance to the defence of Australia. The event will also attract additional visiting warbird aircraft who will participate in the flying program.

December

National Cherry Festival, Young

Celebrate the cherry harvest with pick-your-own tours, busking and bush poetry competitions, a street parade and heritage train rides.

Traveller Information

Find out more on the web



Looking for information about holidaying in NSW? To help plan a great trip to any part of NSW, go to our website: visitnsw.com

More than 5,000 accommodation choices are listed, from boutique hotels and resorts to beach getaways and country retreats. The best attractions in the State are also here – the museums, art galleries, wineries, zoos and

national parks that add so much to your trip. And there are 500 tours to help you get out and explore the best of NSW with the experts.

At any time of the year there are great local events to enjoy, from wine shows, music festivals, rodeos and campdrafts to whale-watching and sporting and cultural celebrations. Check the events section on the website for full details.

And if you want to plan a driving holiday, then follow our driving directions to plan your travel route around NSW.

Sign up for the latest deals

To keep up with the latest travel tips and best holiday deals in NSW, become an Escapes member. Not only will you receive our monthly e-news bulletin, but you'll also have the chance to win some great travel prizes.

visitnsw.com

Visitor safety tips

Driving and motorcycle riding

In NSW, seatbelt-wearing is compulsory as are child restraints and baby capsules. It is illegal to leave a child unattended in a vehicle. For motorcyclists, crash helmets are mandatory. The signposted speed limit is the maximum driving speed allowable, but some towns have streets with a 50 km/h speed limit, which applies in all built-up areas. Reduced speeds at school zones, road works and other special areas still apply. The blood alcohol limit for drivers is 0.05% and zero for L- and P-plate drivers. A major cause of death and injury is driving while fatigued. Ensure you are well rested before undertaking a long trip, and take a break every two hours.

Road conditions in NSW can vary from multi-lane motorways to single-lane roads. Some roads may be gravel or compacted earth, with narrow and unstable edges. Drive slowly on narrow bridges and be aware of hazards such as flooded roads, which may have a current capable of sweeping your vehicle away. Don't take the chance – use an alternative route.

Watch out for kangaroos, livestock and other animals on the road. Apart from the suffering you may cause the animal if you hit them, even a wallaby can seriously damage your car and injure you and your occupants. The most active times for kangaroos and

wallabies are sunrise and sunset. If a kangaroo crosses in front of you, reduce speed and do not swerve suddenly or you may roll your vehicle.

Water safety

Check if the beach is patrolled by lifesavers before swimming and do so only between the red and yellow flags. Many surfing spots have strong currents called rips. If caught in a rip, don't panic but swim along with the rip, not against it, and raise your hand.

Be very careful when swimming in isolated locations in rivers, creeks and waterholes, especially if you have children with you. Do not dive off rocks into natural pools that may be too shallow as this can

cause permanent spinal injuries. Don't swim or surf in the dark, or if under the influence of alcohol.

In the bush

If embarking on a bushwalk, always tell someone where you are going and be prepared for unexpected weather. Check the degree of difficulty of your walk: the scale is from 1 to 5, with 5 the hardest. Never walk alone and always take sufficient water for the duration of the walk. Limit your use of fire and seek information on conditions from the ranger station or visitor information centre. Carry a mobile phone if you're within range of a network.

In an emergency, telephone 000.

Accredited Visitor Information Centres

When you are on the road, look for the information symbol . Call into a NSW Accredited Visitor Information Centre for advice on all you need to know about places to stay and things to see and do in the local area. Opening hours are 9 am to 5 pm, every day.

Albury Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 252 879
visitalburywodonga.com

Armidale Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6770 3888
armidaletourism.com.au

Bathurst Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 68 1000
visitbathurst.com.au

Boorowa Courthouse Arts & Crafts Co-op
Telephone: (02) 6385 3885
boorowa.nsw.gov.au

Canowindra Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6344 2450
ageoffishes.org.au

Cobram Barooga
Telephone: 1800 607 607
cobrambarooga.org.au

Coonabarabran Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 242 881
warrumbungleregion.com.au

Cootamundra Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 350 203
cootamundra.nsw.gov.au

Corowa Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 814 054
visitcorowashire.com.au

Cowra Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 266 173
cowratourism.com.au

Crookwell Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 4832 1988
upperlachlantourism.com

Deniliquin Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 650 712
denitourism.com.au

Dubbo Visitors Centre & Events Bureau
Telephone: 1800 674 443
dubbo.com.au

Forbes Railway Arts & Tourist Centre
Telephone: (02) 6852 4155
forbes.nsw.gov.au

Gilgandra Co-ee Heritage & Visitor Centre
Telephone: (02) 6817 8700
gilgandra.nsw.gov.au

Glen Innes Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6730 2400
gleninnestourism.com

Goulburn Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 353 646
igoulburn.com

Griffith Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 681 141
griffith.com.au

Gundagai Visitor Information and Travel Centre
Telephone: (02) 6944 0250
gundagai.nsw.gov.au

Gunnedah Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 562 527
infogunnedah.com.au

Hay Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 307 090
hay.nsw.gov.au

Inverell Visitors Centre
Telephone: 1800 067 626
inverell.com.au

Leeton Visitors Centre
Telephone: (02) 6953 6481
leetontourism.com.au

Mathoura Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (03) 5884 3730
mathoura.com

Merriwa Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6548 2607
upperhuntertourism.com.au

Mildura
Telephone: 1800 039 043
visitmildura.com.au

Moree Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6757 3350
moreetourism.com.au

Mudgee Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 816 304
visitmudgeeregion.com.au

Muswellbrook Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 065 773
muswellbrook.org.au

Narrabri Shire Visitors Centre
Telephone: 1800 659 931
visitnarrabri.com.au

Narrandera Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 672 392
narrandera.com.au

Orange Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 069 466
visitorange.com.au

Parkes Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 624 365
visitparkes.com.au

Queanbeyan Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 026 192
visitqueanbeyan.com.au

Scone Visitor Information & Wine Centre
Telephone: (02) 6540 1300
upperhuntertourism.com.au

Singleton Visitor Information & Enterprise Centre
Telephone: 1800 449 888
visitsingleton.com

Swan Hill
Telephone: 1800 625 373
swanhillonline.com

Tamworth Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6767 5300
visittamworth.com

Temora Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6977 1086
temora.com.au

Tenterfield Gateway Visitors Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6736 1082
tenterfieldtourism.com

Tocumwal Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 677 271
toconthemurray.com.au

Tumut Region Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6947 7025
tumutregion.com.au

Uralla Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6778 4496
uralla.com

Wagga Wagga Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1300 100 122
visitwaggawagga.com

Walcha Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6774 2460
walchansw.com.au

Wellington Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 621 614
visitwellington.com.au

Wentworth Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (03) 5027 5080
visitwentworth.com.au

Yarrowonga-Mulwala
Telephone: 1800 062 260
yarrowongamulwala.com.au

Yass Valley Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: (02) 6226 2557
yass.nsw.gov.au

Young Visitor Information Centre
Telephone: 1800 628 233
visityoung.com.au

back cover, top row: Walking through the vines at Cruickshank Callatoota Estate, Upper Hunter (Phillip Quirk); Gostwyck chapel near Uralla; Siding Spring Observatory (David Kirkland).

back cover, middle row: Horsingrid at the Arena Horsemanship Centre, Mudgee (Evolving Images); Cowra district, (Hamilton Lund); Beautiful countryside, Young (Sally Mayman);

back cover, bottom row: The Old Stone House, Bungendore (Don Fuchs); Black rhino, one of the endangered species at Western Plains Zoo (Torsten Jones); The Coonawarra paddle steamer cruises the Murray.

QUEENSLAND

ZONE LEGEND

Freeway/Highway	 sealed	 unsealed
Main Road	 sealed	 unsealed
Railway		
Airport		
Metropolitan area		
National Park		

SCALE

0 km 20 40 60 80 100



NEW SOUTH WALES

Broken Hill

Bourke

Tottenham

Condobolin

WILLANDRA LAKES
WORLD HERITAGE AREA

WILLANDRA
NP

MUNGO NP

MALLEE
CLIFFS
NP

Wentworth

Mildura

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Euston

Robinvale

Balranald

Tooleybuc

Swan Hill

Lake Boga

Koondrook

Barham

Moama

Echuca

VICTORIA

Deniliquin

Griffith

Hay

OOLAMBEAYN
NP

COCOPARRA
NP

Leeton

Narrandera

Coolamon

Wagga
Wagga

Lockhart

Jerilderie

Henty

Holbrook

Cobram

Yarrawonga

Mulwala

Rutherglen

Corowa

Howlong

Albury

Wodonga

Tallangatta

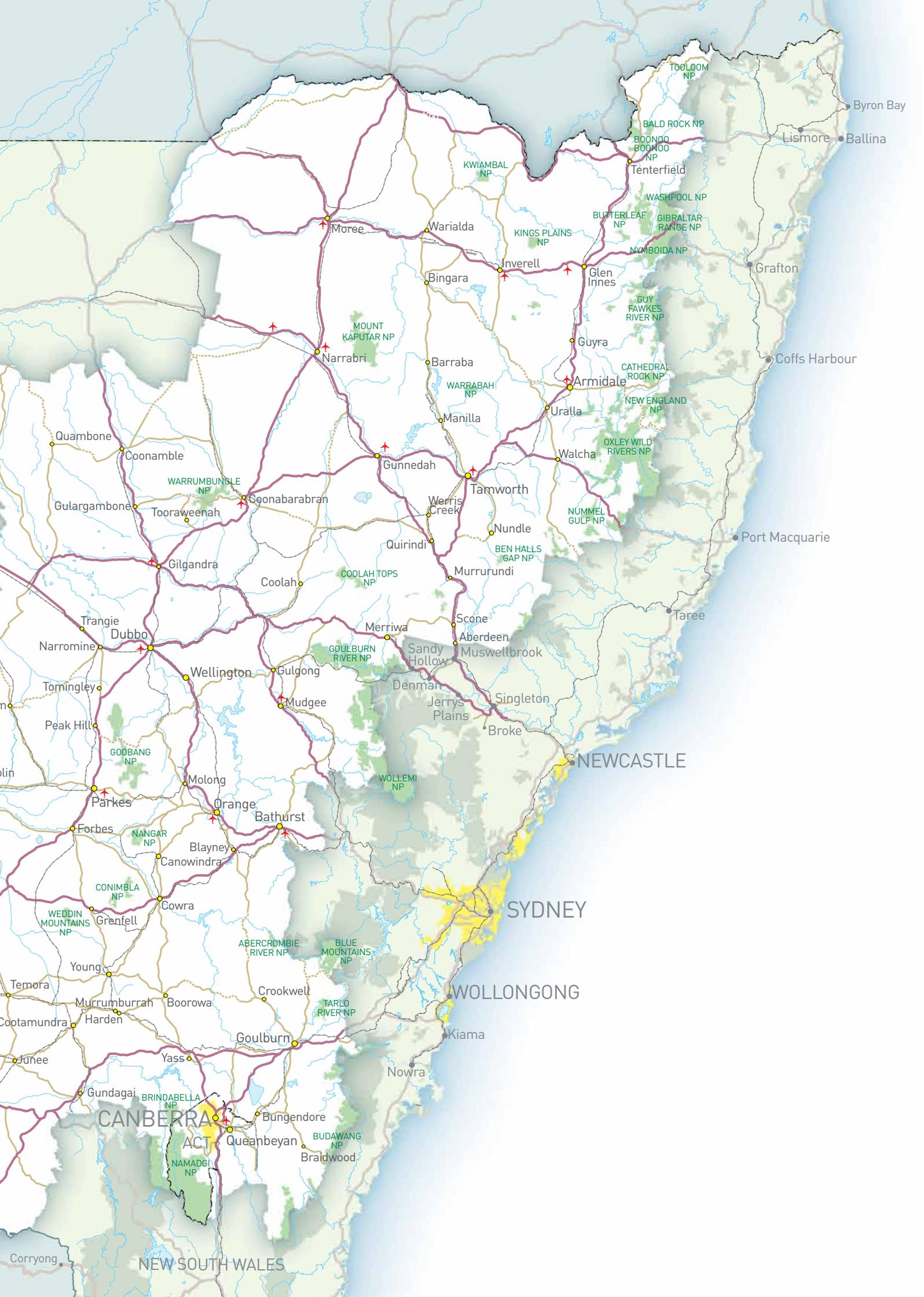
Lake
Cargelligo

LAKE
BREWSTER

LAKE
CARGELLIGO

Hillston

Albury



Byron Bay
Lismore
Ballina

Tenterfield

Grafton

Coffs Harbour

Port Macquarie

Taree

NEWCASTLE

SYDNEY

WOLLONGONG

Kiama
Nowra

CANBERRA

NEW SOUTH WALES

Corryong

