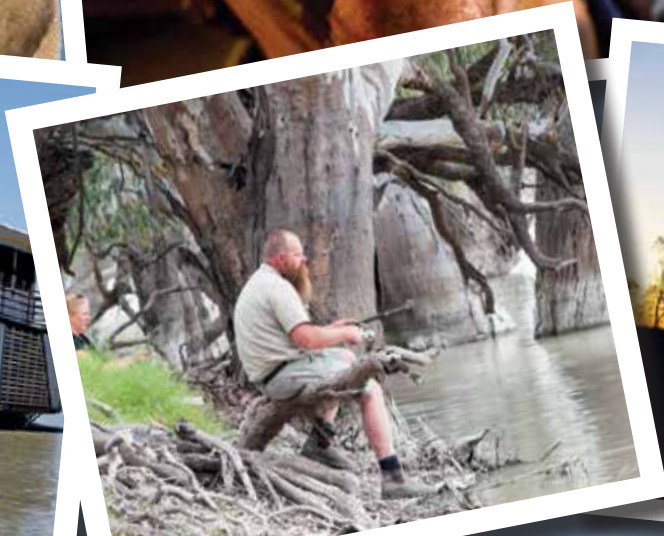
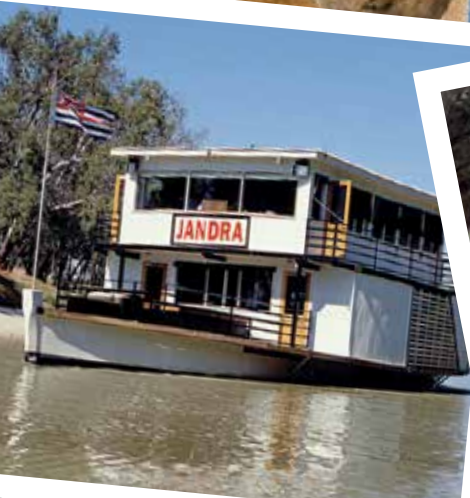
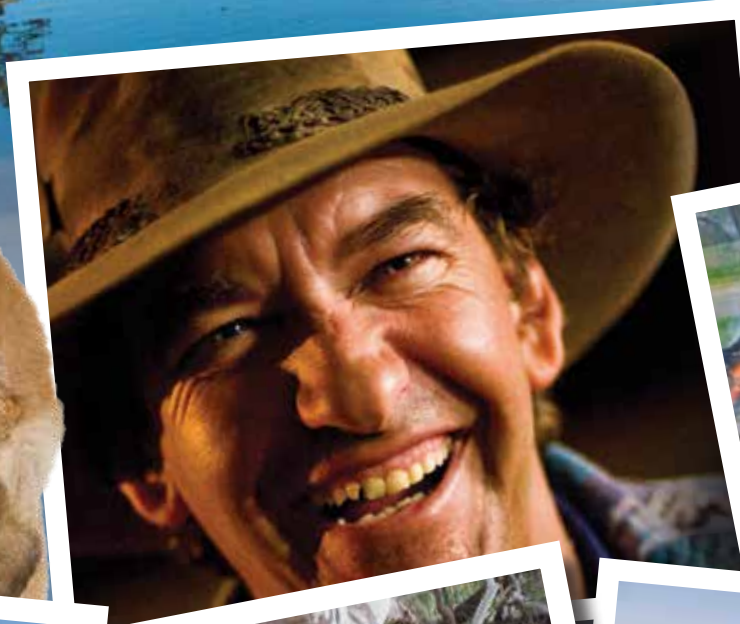


# The Darling River Run

## OUTBACK NSW

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# THE DARLING RIVER RUN

## WALGETT

The Aboriginal meaning of "Walgett" is "meeting of two waters" as the town is located by the junction of the Namoi and Barwon Rivers. Walgett is 696 km north-west of Sydney and is the centre for the surrounding rural area which is based around the production of wool, beef cattle, fat lambs, sheep studs, chickpeas and its biggest industry, wheat. In fact Walgett has the largest temporary wheat storage facility in the southern hemisphere.

### WALGETT ATTRACTIONS

The **Walgett Bore Baths** are located in Fox Street, the main street of Walgett, opposite the Walgett District Sporting Club. The baths are open seasonally from March to October with no entry charge. The warm artesian waters are rich in potassium salts, which are therapeutic for tired and aching muscles.

### SIDE TRIP—LIGHTNING RIDGE

This wonderful side-trip from the Darling River Run will take you to the iconic Australian Opal mining town of Lightning Ridge. Whether you are looking for the famous **Black Opal**, wanting to explore some wonderful galleries or just take in the experiences of a mining town, 'The Ridge' is a must. It's an easy 1 hour drive from Walgett. Attractions at "The Ridge" include artesian bore baths, **Mine Tours** and the **John Murray Art Gallery**. There is an alternative route through to Brewarrina via Cumborah.

## WALGETT TO BREWARRINA

### East Route: Kamilaroi Highway (Sealed)

**133km** - The first downstream sector of The Darling River Run follows the Kamilaroi Highway along the Barwon River before crossing the river just before Brewarrina.

## BREWARRINA

Brewarrina may only be small in size, but its culture, Aboriginal dreamtime stories, rich

Cover photographs by: Simon Bayliss - Red Dirt Studio

history and its connection to the river makes it a destination with so much soul it would be the envy of larger cities. Brewarrina is home to some of the most significant Aboriginal heritage in Australia.

### BREWARRINA ATTRACTIONS

**Baiaimes Ngunnhu (Fish Traps)** - is an elaborate network of rock weirs and pools which stretch for around half a kilometre. The Ngunnhu were constructed to catch and store fish as they swam upstream. Estimated to be over 40,000 years old, these ingenious rock configurations are believed to be one of the oldest man-made structures on Earth.

The **Brewarrina Barwon Bridge** is one of only 2 remaining lift span bridges in NSW that allowed traffic to cross over the Barwon River. It lifted in the centre and allowed paddle steamers to continue up and down the river.

The Bridge was a technically sophisticated structure when built in 1889 and required two men to wind a pulley mechanism to lift the spans - this was latter modified in 1913 so that only one person was required to operate it.

The bridge is recognised as being of NSW State significance as it contributed significantly to the social and commercial development of north western New South Wales and opened up the 'back country' in the late 1800's.

## BREWARRINA TO BOURKE

### East Route: Kamilaroi Highway (Sealed)

**98km** - The Brewarrina to Bourke section of The Darling River Run is an easy drive along the Kamilaroi Highway with limited access to the river. The Darling River proper starts at the confluence of the Barwon and Culgoa Rivers approximately 40 kilometres East of Bourke near where you will cross the Wayne O'Mally bridge over the Bogan River. The mountain in the distance is Mt Oxley. Permits for a drive to the top are available from the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre.

### West Route: West Culgoa Road (unsealed)

**139km** - an alternate route from Brewarrina to

Bourke following the Culgoa River path. Depart Brewarrina east on the Kamilaroi, turn left onto Twin Waters Road then left onto West Culgoa Road. Left onto the Mitchell Highway to get to Bourke.

## BOURKE

Bourke is a beautiful historic town set on the banks of the Darling River. There is much to see and do in and around the Bourke region deserving of a few nights stay.

The soul of the outback can be both seen and felt in Bourke, a town with unparalleled experiences that stay with you long after the journey ends. Bourke truly is the cultural hub of the Australian outback.

### BOURKE ATTRACTIONS

The **Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre** is a world class experience that tells the story of times gone by in outback Australia. The Centre uses a number of stunning displays to highlight the outback legends, transport and communication in the bush, the Early Explorers and much more. The Exhibition Centre also houses the busy Visitor Information Centre and provides the latest roads information, itinerary planning, accommodation suggestions and much more.

Cruise the Darling River on the modern replica paddleboat the **PV Jandra**. The Jandra was built in 2000 and copies many of the features of the original Jandra built in the 1890's. Join us during our cruising season on a one hour journey featuring a comprehensive commentary of life on the river and the flora and fauna that you will see along the way.

While at the wharf stop and take a look at the fully restored 1923 vintage **Crossley Engine** manufactured by the Crossley Brothers of Manchester, England.

Other Bourke attractions include the Lock & Weir, Fort Bourke Stockade, Maritime Trail, Historical Buildings, Fred Hollow's Vision Way, Poets Corner, the Historic Cemetery and Nancy Bird Air Terminal. Pop into the Back O' Bourke Exhibition Centre for assistance.





Photograph by D. Finnegan, OEH.

# THE DARLING RIVER RUN

## BOURKE TO LOUTH

**East Route: Louth Road (mostly unsealed) 99km**

- Gundabooka National Park - see the imposing Mount Gunderbooka, go camping in the outback at Dry Tank or Yanda Campground and see **Aboriginal rock art** (Mulgowan (Yapa) Art Site). Follow easy trails from Bennetts Gorge picnic area in Gundabooka National Park. At Bennetts Gorge you may wish to walk the Valley of the Eagles trail up to the top of Mount Gunderbooka.

Nearby Rose Isle Farmstay is a lovely spot on the Darling River to overnight.

**West Route: Toorale Road, 126km (104km unsealed)**

- Toorale National Park - Once one of the great pastoral empires of NSW, the property was owned by Sir Samuel McCaughey from 1880 to 1913, and in its day, included an incredible 400,000 hectares of prime pastoral land.

At the junction of the Warrego and Darling rivers, take the Darling River Drive (41km Loop), in Toorale National Park, where you can stop for a spot of fishing. The Darling River Drive showcases the natural beauty of meandering Darling River as well as Toorale National Park and State Conservation Area - perfect for 4WD adventurers and independent travellers. The Darling River Drive offers beautiful secluded spots for free camping by the bank of the Darling River (Darling River camp (Yapara Paaka Thuru)). You can enjoy a picnic lunch at the Many Big Rocks Picnic Area (Karnu Yalpa), while you relax to the sounds of the birds and the tranquil water flowing over the natural rock weir. Of an evening, Toorale delivers the most awe-inspiring sunsets and incredible starry nights.

**Historic Toorale Homestead** - The stories of station life have been captured and are being told through the new series of installations located at the Homestead Precinct.

Enjoy the floodplain views at **Mount Talowla** lookout.

## LOUTH

The village of Louth was established in 1859 when an Irishman named T.A. Mathews built a pub to cater for the passing river trade and the Cobb and Co coaches, both of which were servicing the booming pastoral industry of that era. He named the town after the County of Louth in Ireland where he was born.

Today, Louth is a small and friendly service town consisting of a pub, fuel stop and a tiny school. **Shindy's Inn** offers fabulous meals, accommodation and powered sites and there is free camping on the riverbank as well.

### LOUTH ATTRACTIONS

Unique to Louth is an amazing and poignant structure known as 'The Celtic Cross'; an eight metre high polished granite monument constructed for the founder of Louth as a perpetual memorial to his first wife **Mary Mathews** (nee Divine), who died in 1869. The headstone was completed in Bendigo in 1882 and a year later it was transported up the Darling from South Australia on the Jane Eliza. It did not arrive in Louth until June, 1886. At the time, the Darling River was too low and the Jane Eliza could not progress beyond Tilpa. It was eventually transported the final 90 km by bullock team. So skillfully designed, engineered and positioned that at sunset each evening it reflects the sun's light back into the village for just 3 minutes, and on the anniversary of Mary's death (August 19) the reflection can be seen from where their home once stood. Not only testament to the love and devotion of a husband for his wife, the monument highlights the skill and accuracy of navigation technology in the 1800's.

The iconic **Louth Races** are held in August each year, drawing a massive crowd keen to capture the magic of the outback. Henry Lawson once wrote that Louth 'loved a drink, a punt and a party' - and nothing much has changed. Race day is the Saturday following the Monday bank holiday early in August, and festivities begin the Wednesday before with the Gundabooka Gold Challenge in aid of the RFDS.

## LOUTH TO TILPA

Louth is ideally located for access to the Darling River Run and offers a choice of eastern or western route downstream to Tilpa.

**West Route: Toorale Road (Unsealed) 91km**

Enjoy the experience of outback life with a station stay at either Trilby Station or Kallara Station, both members of the Outback Beds network.

Take a walk back in history at Dunlop Station, once a million acres and the first shed in the world to complete a mechanical shearing in 1888. The Chandler family offer tours of the homestead,

shearing shed and store weekends and public holidays.

**East Route: Darling River Road East (Unsealed) 93km.**

This route provides some great access to the river along the drive from Louth to Tilpa.

## TILPA

Located on the western banks of the Darling River is the welcoming town of Tilpa. Originally a busy port servicing the river trade and local agriculture, Tilpa is a must for a stopover. The **Tilpa Pub** - a true classic, has been welcoming travellers and locals for over 100 years. Tilpa has the only Boer War Memorial that includes a commemorative to Harry (The Breaker) Morant and has the only cemetery in Australia with no one in it.

## TILPA TO WILCANNIA

**West Route: West Tilpa Road (Unsealed) 128km**

**East Route: East Tilpa Road (Unsealed) 147km**

Some of the most scenic driving along the Darling River is on the east road between Tilpa and Wilcannia. The Coach and Horses campground is part of the Paroo-Darling National Park and the entrance is approximately 120km west of Tilpa.

## WILCANNIA

You will be amazed at the richness of the architecture in this once significant inland port. Impressive buildings include the Post Office (built 1880) and Athenaeum Library (built 1883), Courthouse (built 1880) and the police station (built 1881). The Centre-Lift Bridge was built in 1896 and now classified by the National Trust.

Be sure to drop in to Miss Barrett's coffee shop in the heart of Wilcannia for superb coffee, homemade cakes and scones, sizzling burgers.

### SIDE TRIP — BROKEN HILL

Broken Hill offers a rich mining heritage, famous artists and their galleries, quality cafes and a good variety of accommodation to enjoy during your visit. The historic town of **Silverton** is just 25 km out of Broken Hill and would be a great inclusion to your Darling River Run itinerary.

### SIDE TRIP — WHITE CLIFFS

The trip from Wilcannia to White Cliffs takes you through the Paroo Darling National Park and delivers you into one of the most amazing opal havens of Australia. White Cliffs is famous for its crystal opal and is home to many miners who live in underground homes called dugouts. Pick up a self-guided map of town.

### SIDE TRIP—CORNER COUNTRY

Where three states meet - the biggest side trip for the Darling River Run takes in the Corner Country including Milparinka, Tibooburra and Sturt National Park. Tibooburra to White Cliffs is 265km so you can re-join the Darling River Run at Wilcannia or Tilpa. Broken Hill to Tibooburra is 335km or about 4 hours.

### WILCANNIA TO MENINDEE

**West Route: West Wilcannia Road (Unsealed) 153km**

The western side is the more frequently used road and will extend your trip by only a few kilometres.

**East Route: Wilcannia-Menindee Road East (Unsealed) 145km**

### MENINDEE

Menindee is a great base for enjoying the natural attractions and regional history. Dine in Maidens Menindee Hotel - the second oldest pub in NSW, visit **Kincheha National Park**, Kincheha woolshed and the Old Kincheha Homestead. The mesmerising Menindee Lake system has a wonderful array of birdlife and haunting river red gums rising from the water. Kincheha National Park offers visitors a unique experience of the Australian outback. With its ever-changing colours - the green lake bed as the water retreats and beautiful reflections in the flood - and rich pastoral and Aboriginal history, a visit to Kincheha will restore your sense of wonder. Enjoy one of our self-guided tours or take a cruise on the River Lady along the Darling River and Lake Wetherell. Come and spend a couple of nights to really take

in what we have and our history as the first established town on the Darling River.

### MENINDEE TO POONCARIE

**Pooncarie Road (85Km Unsealed) 123km**

### POONCARIE

The Burke and Wills expedition camped in the area in 1860 after their trek from Swan Hill via Balranald. By 1889 Pooncarie boasted a General Store, Post Office, Police Station, School, two Hotels and a number of houses. Although land was set aside for a church it was never built. Paddle steamers brought supplies to Pooncarie and other towns along the Darling and transported wool onto major ports.

The old wharf is an interesting reminder of the past paddle steamer times which ended in the 1920's with the move to trains and trucks.

### SIDE TRIP—MUNGO NATIONAL PARK

The village of Pooncarie is located on the eastern side of the Darling River and is the ideal location for a visit to wonderful Mungo National Park part of the Willandra Lakes Region World Heritage Area (88 km). The breathtaking Mungo is one of the world's most significant national parks with archaeological finds including an extensive collection of fossilised human footprints.

Artefacts have been found from this ancient culture dating back 40,000 years across the expanses of the last ice age. This makes Mungo one of the oldest places outside of Africa to have been occupied by modern humans since ancient times. Booking a guided tour with an Aboriginal guide to see the extraordinary Walls of China is highly recommended.

### POONCARIE TO WENTWORTH

**West Route: High Darling Road / Low Darling Road (Unsealed) 123km**

**East Route: Pooncarie Road 118km**

## THE MURRAY DARLING

### WENTWORTH

The meeting of the waters - situated at the confluence of the Darling and Murray Rivers, Wentworth is the region's oldest town, with a fascinating history that includes explorers and the colourful river-boat trade. Captain Charles Sturt arrived at the confluence on the 23rd of January 1830, and named the Murray River after recognising the end of the Darling. He had in 1829 renamed the Darling River after Governor Ralph Darling.

### WENTWORTH ATTRACTIONS

Say 'Hello, Darling' from the observation tower, where Australia's two greatest rivers - the Darling and the Murray - meet.

Climb the red dunes of the prehistoric Perry Sandhills, the backdrop for many films and commercials.

Stand beneath the canopy of 'The God Tree', an ancient river red gum that has survived the centuries, now stranded amid rolling red sand dunes.

Experience a cruise on the PS Ruby that reminds us of the colourful past of the riverboat trade. Discover Thegoa Lagoon with its proximity to the river junction was a natural 'meeting place' where indigenous people gathered for Corroborees.

Visit Lock 10 which is one of 13 locks and 15 weirs situated along the Murray River.

See the first tractor monument in the world that was established by the people of Wentworth. Built in honour of the TEA20 Harry Ferguson tractors' involvement in the building of the massive levee banks that protected Wentworth against the devastating 1956 floods.

Learn about a man called "Possum".

## The Darling River Run



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