



Day 1 (LD): Nowra to Dubbo – Monday 02 September 2019

Welcome to our **8 day tour to the Lightning Ridge Opal fields**, Dubbo and Mudgee. This morning we **depart Stuarts Depot at 7:00am**, our main destination is **Lightning Ridge** – where we spend 3 days exploring this unique outback opal mining town. Today we travel to **Dubbo**, so sit back and enjoy the service and facilities aboard our touring coach as we depart Nowra and travel through Cowra, Parkes to Dubbo. *(Dinner in the motel/Lunch at Cowra)*

Comfort Inn Blue Lagoon Dubbo (02 6882 4444)

Day 2 (BLD): Dubbo – Tuesday 03 September 2019

After breakfast we make our way to the **Taronga Western Plains Zoo** where we spend the morning. The Zoo is home to more than 1100 animals from around the world, many of them endangered species. The Zoo is in the unique position to allow many of the animals to roam freely and to be viewed without the visual barriers of fences, bars or glass, instead using a system of dry and water-filled moats. A zoo keeper will step onboard our coach and explain the open range layout and some of the behind the scenes operations of the Zoo. We have time at leisure to explore the zoo before making our way to **Dundullimal Homestead**. Wealthy Squatter John Maughan built Dundullimal in the 1840's as the head station of his 1600 acre sheep run. Maughan sold the property in 1858, and it was subsequently occupied by three prominent Dubbo families. The slab house and stone stables that remain bear testimony to the hardships and conditions of colonial life on the land. We enjoy lunch here before returning to the township where we visit the **Old Dubbo Gaol**. Originally a courthouse lockup in 1847, it was proclaimed an official Gaol in 1859 and closed operations as a penal institution in 1966. It was officially re-opened as a tourist attraction in 1974. It is now fully restored and home to a large display of animatronic models and holographic displays which provide a realistic and fascinating insight into a bygone era of barbaric prison life. After our full day of touring we return to our motel with time to freshen up before dinner. *(Breakfast & Dinner in the motel/Lunch at Dundullimal)*

Comfort Inn Blue Lagoon Dubbo (02 6882 4444)

Day 3 (BLD): Dubbo to Lightning Ridge – Wednesday 04 September 2019

After breakfast we continue north to **Gilgandra**, home of the Coo-ees and the Town of Windmills. In Bridge Street a plaque commemorates that starting point of the famous "Coo-ee" recruiting march of World War I. The beautiful St Ambrose Anglican Church is also in part a tribute to the march as well. From here we travel through **Gulargambone**, **Coonamble** and **Walgett** where we stop for lunch, then arrive into **Lightning Ridge**, where we collect our **local guide** for a **tour** of town. With its stark and scarred landscape this town has a peculiar fascination for visitors. During our tour we'll view an **open cut mine**, see the **Bore Baths** and **Coopers Cottage**. This authentic miner's camp was built in 1916 and is a genuine historical display of early pioneer living. After our wonderful day we check into our accommodation – home base for the next three nights. *(Breakfast in the motel/ Lunch provided/ dinner at Lightning Ridge Bowling Club)*

Wallangulla Motel, Lightning Ridge (02 6829 0542)

Day 4 (BD): Lightning Ridge – Thursday 05 September 2019

After breakfast we head to the **Walk-In-Mine** to experience the atmosphere of an underground mine. We also have a tour including a video presentation and explanation about opal mining. We then visit the showroom to view the opals that came from the mines in this area. Next is a visit to the **John Murray Art Gallery**, well worth a visit. John has been kept busy adding to his mural on the outside wall of the Gallery, affectionately named "Billygoat Lane" (in reference to its original name). We now have some free time for lunch (own expense) before an afternoon visit to the **Chambers of the Black Hand**. Opened in April, 2007, this is a unique tourist mine. At 11.2m underground, local artist Ron Canlin has created the most amazing paintings and sculptures. There is The Last Supper, Archangel Gabriel and the Chinese Terracotta Warriors. Ron is constantly carving new work, such as a samurai warrior so there are changes every day. The second level is a mine that has been worked for over 100 years, and all the old shafts and drives that were dug by the old timers are still there. On this level a geology tour will give us the different strata's opal formation - an experience not to be missed. Overall, it is a very unique visit. Our last stop for the day is to **Amigos Castle**, a huge Italian Style Castle built by one man from ironstone. We'll take a look around then return to our motel. *(Breakfast in the motel/Lunch own arrangements & cost/ dinner at Lightning Ridge Bowling Club)*

Wallangulla Motel, Lightning Ridge (02 6829 0542)

Day 5 (BLD): Grawin, Glengarry & Sheeppark Opal Fields – Friday 06 September 2019

No trip to Lightning Ridge would be complete without a trip to **The Grawin ****. We'll see interesting places like **The Pub in the Scrub**, **The Glengarry Hilton** and **Sheeppark Flats**. Located about 70km west of Lightning Ridge, The Grawin was established in 1908 with the discovery of the opal at "Hammond Hill". Further discoveries in 1920 at "Richards Hill" put the unofficial village on the map. It was at Grawin that the largest opal 'Light of the World' was found in 1928. Since the first discovery of opal in the region, people have come and gone in tides with each new strike, seeking their fortune in search of the rainbow in the rock. It is believed that a field at Grawin was discovered in 1905 but it wasn't until the 1970s that it became a major field in its own right. The Mulga Rush, which began in 2000, is the biggest opal rush since the Coocoran was discovered in the early 1900s. The Sheeppark area was named after a find of opal near the fence of the old Sheepparks. A **local guide** will join us on our day's tour and **lunch** is enjoyed at the **Glengarry Hilton**. After a great day we head back to Lightning Ridge. We have one last stop to make at **Bevans Cactus Farm**. Started in 1966 and now encompassing two passionate generations, Bevan's host the largest cactus nursery in the Southern Hemisphere with approximately 2,500 young and aged varieties. Grown from seeds collected from around the world, many plants are now over 100 years old, with the oldest being nearly 150 years of age. *(Breakfast in the motel/ Lunch provided/ dinner at Lightning Ridge Bowling Club)*

**** Please Note: Today's Touring depends on local weather and road conditions****

Wallangulla Motel, Lightning Ridge (02 6829 0542)

Day 6 (BLD): Lightning Ridge to Mudgee – Saturday 07 September 2019

This morning we farewell Lightning Ridge and travel back through Walgett and Coonamble then east into the **Warrumbungle National Park**. This mountain range juts abruptly from the expanse of inland plains, born of violent volcanic action some 13 million years ago. The National Park is home to hundreds of native animals and wildflowers bedeck the mountains and plain lands of the park. We spend time travelling through the national park and stop off for a picnic lunch. We continue on through **Coonabararan** and **Gulgong**, an old gold town that was once described as, believe it or not, "the hub of the world! Gulgong was also the boyhood home of the author Henry Lawson. We arrive into Mudgee and check into our accommodation for the next 2 nights with time to freshen up before dinner. *(Breakfast & dinner in the motel/picnic lunch provided)*

Comfort Inn Aden Hotel Mudgee, Mudgee (02 6372 1122)

Day 7 (BLD): MUDGEE – Sunday 08 September 2019

We start our touring today by welcoming a locally based tour guide on the coach for a tour of the town. Architect Robert Hoddle designed the town street plan, which proved to be so successful that Melbourne was designed from the same basic grid. He designed Mudgee's wide streets to be broad enough to turn a team of oxen. Many of the fine old stately buildings from the last century thankfully remain and most are now classified by the National Trust, so as to preserve the town's heritage. After our sightseeing tour we drop into **Mudgee Honey Haven**, offering both honey and mead tastings. We then have time for a look around **Arts & Crafts Mudgee** - a co-operative shop displaying a wide range of quality art and craft. Our afternoon is spent at **Gooree Park** where we enjoy lunch and hear a talk on their diverse operation. Our final visit for the day is at **Robert Stein Wines**, where we have a wine tasting and spend some time to look through the Motor Cycle Museum that is the is home to Robert's Stein's personal collection of motorcycles, rare motorcycle collectables and photographs. *(Breakfast & dinner in the motel/lunch at Gooree Park)*

Comfort Inn Aden Hotel Mudgee, Mudgee (02 6372 1122)

Day 8 (BL): MUDGEE TO NOWRA – Monday 09 September 2019

This morning we head for home via the beautiful Blue Mountains after a wonderful holiday. *(Breakfast at motel /lunch at Wallacia Hotel)*

All itineraries are subject to change due to occasional restrictions in opening times/days of some attractions, e.g. churches, wineries etc. We cannot be held responsible for any changes due to closures, inclement weather etc. This itinerary is going through a National Park. Please check if you require an Operator's License to enter the park.

\$300 per person deposit at time of booking

Balance by 8th July 2019

Minimum No's needed for this to proceed

Booking Terms & Conditions

Accommodation is on share room basis in Motels, Hotels etc. The accommodation named may be altered without notice.

The right is reserved to amend or modify the Itinerary at any time without notice for unpredictable weather or road conditions or for any other reason beyond our control.

Cancellation Fees: In the event of cancellation of a tour the following fees apply:

- 60 days or more prior to departure, loss of deposit.
- Between 7 and 59 days prior to departure, 50% of tour price.
- Less than 7 days prior to departure, 100% of tour price.

Refunds: No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour after departure.

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