

# THE DOWLING TRACK



FEEL YOUR  
*Spirit Soar*  
AS YOU  
*Journey*  
ON THE TRACK





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## BOURKE

"BACK O' BOURKE" is more than a geographical location, it's part of the Australian language, part of its folklore. As Henry Lawson wrote in 1892, "If you know Bourke, you know Australia". Photographers, naturalists, historians, lovers of poetry, birdwatchers, visitors or just plain old Aussies wanting to discover their roots, welcome to the Back O' Bourke.

Bourke Shire, at the junction of the Mitchell and Kamilaroi Highways and the Kidman Way, covers an area of 43,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to approximately 2600 people. The Shire's main agricultural industries include cotton, cattle production, as well as a NSW small stock abattoir and of course the wool industry, part of Bourke's history since the 1860s.

## FORDS BRIDGE

Fords Bridge, located on the Warrego River, was once a small flourishing town with a butcher shop, post office, school and race track. Today 'Fordsy' is a sleepy town of four. Call into the historical Warrego Hotel, built in 1913 from mud brick, thought to be the only pub in Australia still standing constructed from mud bricks.



## YANTABULLA

Originally called Yanda Bullen Bullen, Aboriginal for 'plenty to eat', once was a prosperous town of nine houses, a hotel, store, school, police station and cordial factory. Vincent Dowling once owned a homestead in Yantabulla and Cobb & Co had a changing station here. Little remains today other than the spirits of those early days.

# NATIONAL PARKS

## HELL HOLE GORGE NATIONAL PARK

Take a trip 96kms north of Quilpie and find yourself in Adavale, then a further 80kms North West of the town you will arrive at Hell Hole. It is an intriguing place with its steep rocky banks and cascades that run after heavy rain, Hell Hole Waterhole is the park's main attraction.

The deeply incised Powell Creek with steep, dissected escarpments and vertical cliffs up to 45m high, drains through the centre of the area along with the smaller Spencer's and Gorge Creek. A 4WD is a must for this adventure as the roads are unsealed as you leave Adavale and can become impassable in the wet.

Phone: **13 74 68** or email: [info@des.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@des.qld.gov.au) and web: [www.des.qld.gov.au](http://www.des.qld.gov.au)

## CURRAWINYA NATIONAL PARK

Located on the Qld / NSW border, near Hungerford, this 151,300 hectare park features two large bodies of water – Lake Numalla which is freshwater and Lake Wyara which is salt water. This makes for a very popular area for birdwatchers as it is home to many rare birds, including the threatened Freckled Duck.

Red sandplains and mulga scrubs beside long, dusty roads give little hint to the lakes, rivers and wetlands that make Currawinya one of Australia's most important inland waterbird habitats. Lake Wyara and Lake Numalla are an important feature of the park which also protects thousands of years of Aboriginal cultural



## HUNGERFORD

Hungerford is a small border town located near the Paroo River on the QLD/NSW border, featuring a large border gate that doubles as a Wild

Dog and Dingo Fence, originally a rabbit proof fence. The entire fence stretches from Jimbour in Qld to the Eyre Peninsula in South Australia. The town was named after Irish pioneer pastoralist Thomas Hungerford.



The Hungerford "Royal Mail Hotel", originally a Cobb & Co Staging Post where weary horses and travellers gained some respite from the road, heat and infrequent floods, was constructed in 1873 of corrugated iron, which was transported over 200 kilometres from New South Wales on bush tracks. The original building is still in use today.

The Royal Mail, as it was in the past, is still a meeting place for the locals, families, shearers, stockmen, and a resting place for travellers who all enjoy the homely, unsophisticated, friendly feel of this iconic Outback Pub. Many visitors use the Royal Mail Hotel as a base for visits to the Currawinya National Park.

## THARGOMINDAH

Thargomindah is a very special town with a unique history. It was the first in Australia and third in the world, just one day after Paris, to have street lighting generated by Hydro Power.

Thargomindah is perfectly positioned as a base for day tripping around our Shire, with a number of iconic attractions within a few hours drive. Or if you'd prefer to stay in town, why not walk or hire a bicycle from the Explorers Caravan Park, head down to the Bulloo River via Pelican Point and throw a pot or two in to catch some nice big blue yabbies for dinner. Take a leisurely walk or ride along the path to the weir, then to the Cobb & Co Crossing, head out to the Hydro Power Plant Display and watch the holographic ghost tell you what it was like back in the day, then onto the Old Hospital, Old Jail and Leahy House in town. All attractions are now

heritage and 19th and 20th century pastoral history as well as threatened wildlife. Relics of the pastoral occupation since the 1960s are scattered throughout the park, including an old steam engine, made in the USA.

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## LAKE BINDEGOLLY NATIONAL PARK

Lake Bindigolly is located 40km east of Thargomindah, or 150km west of Cunnamulla on the Bulloo Developmental Road (Adventure Way).

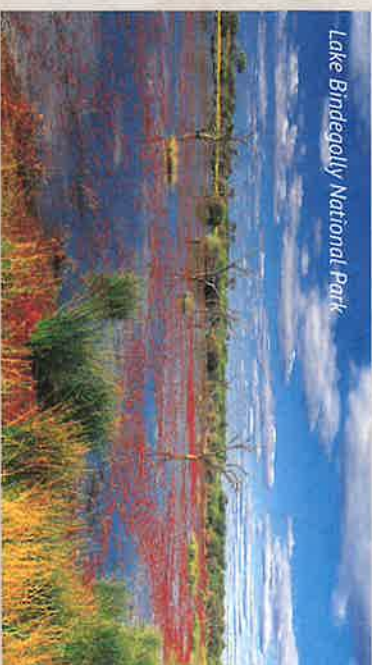
A string of fresh and salt water lakes – Bindigolly, Toomaroo and Hutchinson – are found in Lake Bindigolly National Park. Although each lake is a separate basin, they join to form a ribbon of water after heavy rainfall in local catchments. At times thousands of waterbirds flock to this inland oasis to feed and to breed.

The diverse 14,000ha Lake Bindigolly National Park also has samphire flats, claypans, sand dunes, hard and soft, red mulga country, gidgee woodlands and Eremophila shrublands.

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## GUNDABOOKA NATIONAL PARK

Gundabooka National Park is ideal for hiking and birdwatching. Mt Gundabooka lies within the magnificent rust coloured cliffs and gorges of the Gundabooka Range. Allow time to explore the



fully automated for use with a swipe card which you can obtain from the Thargomindah Visitor Centre.

There are also plenty of options for grabbing a meal and types of accommodation to suit your budget.

## TOOMPINE

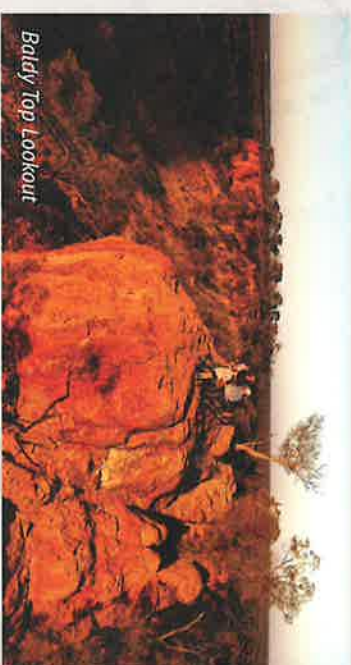
The current South Western Hotel in Toompine, or simply known to locals at the 'Toompine Pub', was built way back in 1893. The original burnt down in 1891. The pub did a great trade in the early years due to the local opal fields. But now the old Cobb & Co staging post is known as the 'Pub with no town'!

## QUILPIE

Quilpie Shire is steeped with a rich pioneering and prehistoric history and an abundance of birdlife and natural wonders. It incorporates the towns of Cheepie, Adavale, Toompine, Fromanga and Quilpie.

Home to the Boulder Opal, there are still places today you can fossick including the FREE local opal fossicking area. If you admire the colours of Opal you visit St Finbar's Catholic Church to view the Opal altar, lectern and font.

Quilpie also boasts wonderful natural locations including one of the best sunset locations in Outback QLD, Baldy Top Lookout. Bird watching is also a great way to enjoy some beautiful natural locations including Lake Houdruman or the Bulloo River, where you could throw in a line for a tasting feast of Yellowbelly.



Aboriginal Rock Art and climb the heights of the 'Valley of the Eagle' track.

## LEDKNAPPER NATURE RESERVE

Red sandy undulating dunes with stony rises, the best of spinifex country, Ledknapper Nature Reserve covers an area of 47864ha. Native wildflower display after winter rains is a photographers delight.

## TOORALE NATIONAL PARK

Toorale is one of the newest National Parks offering a fascinating mix of history and nature. The Darling River drive is a perfect area for camping and exploring the park. The Homestead precinct offers interpretive displays and Mount Talowla lookout provides the perfect vantage point with views over the vast floodplains and across to Mount Gundabooka.

## NOCOLECHE NATURE RESERVE

Located in the North West of Bourke Shire the Nocoleche Nature Reserve was created to protect a nationally important network of river channels, wetlands and floodplains. Visitors are welcome at the King Charlie Day Use Area (20km south of Wanaaring) where you can enjoy picnicking and fishing on the banks of the Paroo River at King Charlie waterhole.

Contact: National Parks Bourke, 51 Oxley Street, Bourke. Phone: **(02) 6830 0200**.



## THARGOMINDAH

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## BACK O' BOURKE

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