

From  
**\$7,450** AUDSingle Room  
\$8,550 AUDTwin Room  
\$7,450 AUDPrices valid until  
30th December 2022**12 days**

Duration

**New South Wales**

Destination

**Level 1 - Introductory to  
Moderate**

Activity

## Small group exploring New England's history and landscapes

Feb 07 2022 to Feb 18 2022

## Exploring New England's history and landscapes

The first people to inhabit the region were the Anairwin people. They tended to avoid the cold winters and were somewhat nomadic. The area within what is described as new England in New South Wales was of importance for ceremonial purposes and trading with other tribes. There was significant trading with the tribes of the Macleay River and



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22-Jan-2022

the Camilleroi people of the Moree district.

Squatters came to the New England in the late 1820's . They were attracted to the fine sheep and cattle grazing pastures. As in other regions their arrival resulted in conflicts with the native inhabitants. Armidale these days is the centre of one of the richest pastoral regions of Australia with high quality superfine wool production, fat lamb raising and extensive beef cattle grazing

Armidale was commissioned as a town in 1848. It is situated on the New England Tablelands in the Great Dividing Range at an altitude of about 1000m. This makes it the highest city in Australia. It also has the highest commercial airport and railway station in Australia.

The Armidale district has an impressive array of physical attractions. There are numerous gorges and waterfalls, the characters of each being determined by the geology of each location. Gold was discovered in Uralla in 1852 and was followed by discoveries at Hillgrove to the east and smaller locations such as Enmore and Mihi to the south east. The gold discoveries attracted a large number of people to move into the area.

With the wealth generated by pastoral and mining activities and the arrival of the railway in 1880's it was not surprising to see Armidale develop into an important regional centre. There are many heritage listed buildings which reflect the prosperity of the people. The celebrated Canadian born architect, Horbury Hunt designed a number of very impressive brick buildings in the 1880s and 90s. These of course are heritage listed.

It also had political influence and it became an important educational centre. Armidale has a diverse range of public and private schools. Armidale Teachers College was the first regional teacher training institution in Australia. Likewise the University of New England , which was established as a College of Sydney University in 1937 and granted full university status in 1954, is the oldest regional university in Australia. The Teachers College was also the recipient of a bequest from Howard Hinton of art works of a diverse array of Australian and New Zealand artists. Works by such artists as Arthur Streeton and Tom

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Roberts are now located in New England Regional Art Museum, one of Australia's most significant art galleries.

This small group tour is designed to allow participants to experience the diverse array of cultural, physical and historical features of the Armidale district. People should be reasonably fit to take full advantage of the areas visited. The nature walks are all of well maintained tracks. The longest of these is about 5km.

## Tour Notes

- The order of visits may change due to individual venue opening hours, weather and Covid-19 restrictions.

## Highlights

1. Learn about the wool industry in the area
2. Visit some of the best regional art galleries in NSW
3. Explore the local landscape on nature walks
4. Highlight 4
5. Highlight 5

## Itinerary

### Day 1

**Locations:** Armidale

**Overview:**

This small group tour begins with a welcome briefing and dinner at the hotel.

Armidale is about 500km north of Sydney, 400km south of [Brisbane](#) and 200km west of Coffs Harbour. The New England highway runs through Armidale. There is one passenger train each day from Sydney.

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It leaves Sydney at about 9am and arrives in Armidale at 5.30pm. This is a lovely trip via Tamworth. There are regular daily flights from Sydney and some from Brisbane.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

**Day 2****Locations:** Armidale**Overview:**

The day starts with a bus tour of the city. Travel to Drummond Lookout for a great panoramic view of the city. We then drive past the old brickworks where the characteristic Armidale bluebricks were manufactured. We then visit the historic Railway Station and its associated Railway museum. We continue through the old parts of the city towards the main street noting various schools and buildings. The streets are mostly lined by imported deciduous trees which provide spectacular Autumn colours.

The bus drops us off at the historic post office and mall. This is the oldest regional mall in NSW. Time for coffee before a guided walk along the mall appreciating the Uralla produced iron lace on the hotels, the old court house architecture, the Richardson family department store and eventually arriving at the Armidale Folk Museum. Opportunity to observe some very well presented exhibits.

After a break for lunch, we'll walk to Central Park. The main feature is the war memorial set in the centre of a park dominated by introduced trees. There is an interesting story about its establishment, mainly due to the efforts of a Catholic priest in the 1890s. He was of Italian origins and had farming background.

On the northern side of the park is the Anglican St Peter's Cathedral, designed by Horbury Hunt and opened in 1888. On the western side of the park is St Mary and St Joseph Catholic Cathedral opened in 1913. Behind the Cathedral is the former Ursulane Convent. Beside it is the current St Mary's Primary School. Opportunity to visit each cathedral is

possible.

Later in the afternoon we walk back to our accommodation and the remainder of the day is at leisure.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

**Day 3**

**Locations:** Uralla District

**Overview:**

Uralla is a town of about 2000 people and 22km south of Armidale. Gold was discovered in 1852, it was mainly alluvial and the fields were centred at Rocky River.

We leave in the morning by bus and travel via Dangarsleigh to Gostwyck Station. There will be an opportunity for photo stop at the Gostwyck church. Covered with Virginia creeper it is located at the end of an impressive elm avenue. The avenue leads to the station homestead but visiting this is not allowed. Adjacent to the church is a view of the unusual DeeRGee woolshed designed by Horbury Hunt. It may be possible to organise a visit to this woolshed and a talk about superfine wool production in the New England region.

We continue through grazing properties to Uralla, stopping at the statue of the celebrated bushranger Thunderbolt (Fred Ward). We then visit McCossin's Mill, this is an amazing museum set in a former flour mill built in the 1880's. It ceased functioning as a flour mill about 1890 and the building was used for a variety of purposes including agricultural produce and a funeral parlour.

Later we visit the Phoenix Foundry where a lot of the Uralla iron lace was made before continuing our town tour with a quick visit to Thunderbolt's grave and perhaps go to Thunderbolt's Rock which is about 3km south of Uralla. Before leaving Uralla it is possible to visit the New England Brewing Company and taste a range of locally brewed beers and cider.

The day concludes with a visit to the site of the goldfields at Rocky River. Very little is left except for the primary school and a couple of

houses.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

**Day 4**

**Locations:** Dangars Falls and Petersens Winery

**Overview:**

00am Leave Armidale and travel 15km to Dangars Falls located in Oxley Wild Rivers NP. This is a spectacular gorge where Saumarez Creek plunges over the edge on its way to the Macleay River. There are a number of lookouts which we will visit. There is a good track leading to these and the return distance is about 4km. (I could organise for a retired NP ranger to give a talk about fire management strategies in the National Park as he was the fire officer who worked closely with local graziers)

We will make our way to the nearby Peterson's Winery on the former Dangar family property of Palmerston for a tour and lunch, followed by an opportunity to taste a variety of high country wines produced by Petersons. We then return to Armidale at the end of the afternoon.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

**Day 5**

**Locations:** Hillgrove, Metz and the Bluehole

**Overview:**

After breakfast we leave Armidale and travel 22km to the almost ghost town of Hillgrove, situated on the edge of the Bakers Creek Gorge. Hillgrove was the site of a rich reef of gold.

In the late 1880s Hillgrove was larger than Armidale. We will enjoy a self-guided walk around the village. Antimony mining still exists including the extraction of some gold. An interesting fact is that Hillgrove was the first town in Australia to have electric street lighting, the electricity was produced by hydrogenation in nearby Gara Gorge

and was first turned on in 1895.

We continue to the other side of the gorge visiting Bakers Creek Falls along the way to Metz. There is a good lookout to view the entrances to the various mines, the chimneys associated with the battery plants and the location of the cable railway.

Around lunch time we wavel back towards Armidale before turning left along the Castledoyle Road to the Bluehole. Here we have a picnic lunch, and later explore the Bluehole which was the water storage site for the hydroelectric power plant.

The Gara River runs into the Bluehole before cascading to the bottom of the gorge in a series of small falls. There is a round trip walk of about 5km to see the site of the hydroelectric power plant that provided the electricity for Hillgrove. This well formed path follows the flume to where it plunges to the bottom of the gorge. You cannot see the remains of the power station but it is a very pleasant walk through woodland and granite boulders.

We return to our accommodation late afternoon.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

**Day 6**

**Locations:** Armidale

**Overview:**

Today we spend the day locally. We start by driving to Armidale Teacher's College. This was the first regional tertiary education venture in Australia and opened in 1929. It was State owned and was run by the NSW Department of Education. It is a very impressive building with beautiful grounds. We will learn more about the building and its history with our local guide. It has a museum and It is the original location of the Howard Hinton Art bequest. Time will also be given to walk around the grounds. We will also visit the railway bridge to view evidence of some of the geological history of Armidale.

In the afternoon we'll visit the New England Regional Art Museum. This museum not only houses the Hinton Collection but also significant works by various artists as well as regular exhibitions by local and

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visiting artists.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

**Day 7**

**Locations:** Armidale

**Overview:**

In the morning we drive to the Armidale Keeping place, a modern building with displays and exhibits of Aboriginal works and history. We'll meet with the director for a talk about the building and the works on display.

We continue the geological history as well some of the significant graves in the Armidale cemetery.

The afternoon is free to explore at your own pace.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

**Day 8**

**Locations:** Oxley Wild Rivers National Park - Guy Fawkes National Park - New England National Park

**Overview:**

A spectacular day starts early morning as we depart east along the Waterfall Way. We visit yet another gorge in Oxley Wild Rivers NP at Wollomombi. There are 2 waterfalls in this gorge – Wollomombi Falls and Chandler Falls. These are from the Wollomombi and Chandler Rivers. Wollomombi Falls at 220m are one of the highest single drops in Australia. An easy walk along the rim can be organised (about 2km round trip).

We continue east for another 60km to Ebor Falls. They are considered one of the prettiest falls in Australia. The Guy Fawkes River plunges over step like cliff face into Guy Fawkes National Park on its way to the Clarence River. We will visit the viewing platform for photos. There used to be a walk to another lookout it was burnt out during the

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December fires and will not be replaced.

We stop for lunch at Ebor Falls Hotel.

We then drive to Point Lookout in New England National Park. At 1535m this is the high point of the tour. Walk to 2 lookout with views of Dorrigo, the Bellinger River valley, the site of the caldera which created a lot of the landscape and the low woodland of snow gums. This park is World Heritage listed. Opportunity will be given to walk downhill to the point where the snow gums give way to Cool Temperate rainforest. This type of rainforest is very limited on mainland Australia. It features the Antarctic Beech trees, ancestors of which were present in Gondwana times when Australia, Antarctica and Sth America were joined together. Lyrebirds are common in this park.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

**Day 9**

**Locations:** UNE campus

**Overview:**

Today we drive to the University of New England Campus. Drive around the residential area and sporting fields before going to the main campus. We'll walk around the campus to gain an overview of this rural university before visiting the historic administrative centre of Booloomimbah. This grand building was designed by the architect Horbury Hunt for the White family and completed in 1883. Opportunity to explore this building and its surrounding gardens.

We'll pause for lunch (own arrangements) followed by a visit to the high quality Museum of Antiquities and the Natural History Museum.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

## Day 10

**Locations:** Saumarez Homestead

### Overview:

Today we our small group will drive to Saumarez Homestead located near Armidale Airport for a guided tour of the house and gardens. This is another historic building, built for the White family. It was built mainly in the late 1880s.

We'll enjoy lunch at the Homestead (if open) before returning to Armidale.

The afternoon is at leisure and in the evening we get together again for our farewell dinner.

### Accommodation:

TBA

## Day 11

**Locations:** Armidale

### Overview:

Our tour concludes today after breakfast at the hotel.

## Inclusions / Exclusions

### What's included in our Tour

- 10 nights accommodation.
- 10 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 4 dinners.
- Entrance fees and excursions as listed.
- Services of a program leader and local guides.

### What's not included in our Tour

- Transport to and from Armidale.

- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Costs of a personal nature.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.