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**€6,317** EUR

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**17 days**  
 Duration

**New South Wales, South Australia**  
 Destination

**Level 2 - Moderate**  
 Activity

# Small group tour of World Heritage sites and more in the Southern States of Australia

Sep 13 2023 to Sep 29 2023

## Small group tour of World heritage sites and more of the Southern States of Australia.

An escorted small group tour of some of the World Heritage sites Australia for for mature and senior travellers is a journey of learning around the Southern edges of the Murray Darling basin and up to the



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upper southern part of this complex river basin north of Mildura. It provides the traveller on this escorted small group tour of South Australia the learning opportunity to gain an insight into Aboriginal habitation land management over some 60,000 years and then more recently the veneer of European settlement in the last two centuries on the landscape. A key part of this tour are the visits to the World heritage area of Mungo in the Willandra lakes region, Budj Bim and Narcoorte which is one of the key Australian fossil mammal sites in the study of megafauna. There are other better known World Heritage sites of Australia listed for the traveller that feature on the UNESCO world heritage list, such as Uluru Kata tjuta, the Blue Mountains, Fraser Island

, Cathedral gorge in Western Australia the Bungle bungle (Purunululu). This small group tour of World Heritage sites takes you to those of key interest in It is part of a portfolio of Australian Outback tours offered by Odyssey for like minded people who are curious about Outback Australia. The itinerary over the 17 days is Adelaide to Adelaide, heading south east initially across Southern Australia to Victoria and Port Fairy. The group then continues up through central Western Victoria to Hamilton and then Narcoorte and on into the lower part of the Murray Darling basin in Mildura, to Broken Hill and then back into South Australia to Adelaide via Burns.

***This, like all Odyssey Traveller small group tours is limited to 12 people***

This escorted small group tour has an interest in both Aboriginal and European settlement history. Over the period of this escorted small group tour the itinerary takes you to visit three UNSECO World Heritage status sites, two with human cultural significance, one of mammal significance; understand and appreciate the complexity and features of the Murray Darling Basin through some spectacular scenery. The program skirts around the edges of the “Aussie Outback“, but is not a outback adventure for the traveller. Whilst the Murray-Darling begins in Queensland, by the time the river system reaches South Australia it represents one the most complex river systems in Australia against which modern agriculture has placed substantial stress. We see the historic and contemporary evidence of this in Mildura and the lakes around Menindee. and the many landscape changes

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including the Mallee, observing and learning about the river woodland galleries, arid lands, saltbush plains, agriculture practices; as well as the mining and railway history of Southern Australia.

## The Itinerary

This seventeen day small group guided tour, travelling through South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria, is designed for the active senior with an interest in Aboriginal and European settlement in Australia over the past 50,000 years. On this escorted tour we visit three World Heritage sites and travel through some of Australia's most diverse landscapes. Our small group tour begins in Adelaide, the capital city of South Australia, before heading north to Broken Hill, east to Lake Mungo and then south to the Victorian coast. This escorted small group tour provides the senior traveller with a learning experience, as well as the chance to simply enjoy a journey, with like minded companions, through some extraordinary scenery.

Three important World Heritage listed sites underpin this tour. From our guided tour of the caves at Naracoorte in South Australia we'll uncover, through the bones of long-extinct animals, evidence of life on this continent long before any humans travelled across it. World Heritage listed Lake Mungo National Park, in western NSW, provides us with, not just an extraordinary landscape, but evidence of an indigenous culture dating back at least 45,000 years. Our third World Heritage site, Budj Bim, in southern Victoria, introduces us to eel traps and the foundations of stone houses dating back thousands of years before the arrival of the first Europeans.

Our small group tour for seniors takes us into the vast sparsely populated Australian Outback, as well as into the more closely settled regions of Victoria's fertile south. On this tour we have the chance to explore much more than the three heritage sites. We'll stop to visit the SA towns of Kapunda, where Sir Sidney Kidman based operations for his vast cattle empire, and Burra, a 19th-century copper mining town with a well-preserved collection of historic buildings. We stay two nights in Broken Hill and visit Silverton, where mining giant BHP began operations. In Mildura we'll discover the impact that the North American

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Chaffey brothers and irrigation had on this semi-arid region. We have the chance to explore the historic fishing town of Port Fairy on Victoria's south coast, while the extinct volcanoes of Mt Gambier provide lessons in geology as well as dramatic scenery for us to admire. Those who remember the *Storm Boy* will find much to interest them in the Coorong where the film is set, and, if you're interested in "big things", then the Big Lobster in Kingston SE is one not to be missed!

## Passing through the Mallee

In Victoria, south-western New South Wales, and South Australia, this tour passes through swathes of mallee country. 'Mallee woodlands' have been listed by the Australian Department of Environment and Energy as one of the 32 'Major Vegetation Groups' of Australia. Mallee country is defined by the predominance of the mallee eucalyptus, a stocky eucalyptus with several stems, which grows on semi-arid soil. Mallee country spreads in a belt across the south of Australia, centring around the Murray River in western Victoria and eastern South Australia, the Eyre Peninsula west of Adelaide, and the 'wheat belt' of Western Australia.

For European settlers, the mallee was a 'dreadful country', desolate and inhospitable, but Aboriginal Australians made a home in these areas for at least 40,000 years. For the numerous Aboriginal groups who inhabited the Victorian/South Australian mallee, the Murray River was a source of life, providing fishing, meat, eggs, and fibrous water plants. The roots of kumpung were steamed in an earth oven, creating a carbohydrate starch similar to flour, which was in turn used to bake cakes. Kumpung was also used to create twine, which was used for fishing nets, the weaving of bags, belts, and headbands, and traded for stone axeheads and myall spears at great gatherings. Murray River peoples also used fire to create pasture mosaics.

Though each group held custodianship over particular lands, the Murray River peoples shared an overlapping culture, with closely-related languages and spiritual beliefs. People around the Murray River believed in an all-Father who was the creator of all things, though he bore different names to different peoples – Bunjil the eaglehawk to the Wotjobaluk and Kulin people, Tha-tha-pulli to the Wadi Wadi, and

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Tulong to the Dadi Dadi.

## UNESCO World Heritage Site: The Budj Bim Cultural Landscape

The following day we travel to Australia 's latest UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape. The landscape was shaped by volcanic activity, but about 6,500 year ago local Aboriginal people on their Gudiyama Country started to alter the existing drainage pattern with extensive channels and earthworks to permit eel production for most of the year.

From at least 6,600 years ago, the Gunditjmarra created an extensive and complex aquaculture network where modified channels diverted water and kooyang (short-finned eel) into holding ponds. Here kooyang grew fat and were harvested with woven baskets set in weirs built from volcanic rocks and wood lattice structures. Dating back thousands of years, the area shows evidence of a large, settled Aboriginal community systematically farming and smoking eels for food and trade in what is considered to be one of Australia 's earliest and largest aquaculture ventures. The local Aboriginal people on their Gudiyama Country built houses and managed the landscape as opposed to the traditional nomadic lifestyle of many Aboriginal communities. It is this aquaculture setting that makes the Budj Bim a world heritage area, featuring on the UNESCO world Heritage list.

This escorted small group tour has a guided 1/2 day tour with a local guide of the Budj Bim cultural landscape. This is a unique insight into Aboriginal culture.

This afternoon the itinerary has this group tour continue its trip across Victoria to Hamilton.

Hamilton is a regional service centre and we break here for the night. There is the opportunity to visit the The Sir Reginald Ansett Transport Museum, Centrepieces of the display are a Fokker Universal aircraft, similar to the one used on the first Ansett flight in 1936, and the 1928 Studebaker. Other memorabilia includes documents from the early days of the Ansett empire. The museum has a complete set of flight

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attendant uniforms and an array of smaller items to keep the nostalgia buffs busy.

## **The Naracoorte Caves Park; A UNESCO World Heritage site.**

From Hamilton we travel to Naracoorte for an afternoon visit to this UNESCO World heritage listing for fossils. The Naracoorte Caves Park is one of only three fossil sites in Australia to be given an official World Heritage Listing. There are two simple reasons why the caves are so important:

They are caves on a flat landscape and therefore secondly were caves that both animals and humans fell into and couldn't get out of – nature created them as traps. The animals that fell into the holes and died in the caves became a unique in the record of Australian fossil mammal sites of such exotica as giant kangaroos, large marsupial lions and giant wombats which once roamed the area. They are collectively referred today as Megafauna.

In the case of the Victoria Fossil Cave a staggering 130 different species of mammals, reptiles, birds and frogs have been discovered making it unique in the Australian fossil mammal sites recorded. It is a repository of near-perfect fossilized skeletons of ancient megafauna of Australia's native wildlife. The bones of Megafauna species such as Thylacoleo carnifex Marsupial Lion, Thylacine, Zygomaturus and sthenurine kangaroo the have been found in the fossil deposits. The fossils, dating back 500,000 years, have been recognised as one of the richest collections of Pleistocene fossils in the world. There are 28 caves in the area and four caves which are open for inspection. With a tour guide, we enjoy an escorted tour to learn about the most important fossils found in the National park.

The Caves preserve the most complete fossil record we have for this period of time, spanning several ice ages, the arrival of humans in the area and the extinction of Australia 's iconic Megafauna roughly 60,000 years ago.

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## Balranald

This escorted group tour now heads north to Ouyen and Balranald travelling through the flat land of wheat fields and grazing sheep.

Balranald is located on the western edge of the vast Hay plain initially settled as a place once used to ford the Murrumbidgee River. Today it is a service centre for the surrounding irrigation district. The Heritage Park in Market Street draws the historic interest of the area with the old gaol, the school house and an historical museum.

The following day our itinerary has this escorted small group tour of South Australia heading into the Australian outback. Pasture gives way to the desert landscape as this group tour travels up to the Mungo National Park where we spend the next two nights in the Willandra lakes region. A unique desert setting for an outback experience.

## Mungo National park

Mungo National Park has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site for some 40 years.

For travellers on this guided tour the fascinating part when looking at the landscape of Mungo and the Willandra Lakes is that it is a geological window where this small group tour can look into the deep past of old Australia. Buried here in thick layers of sand and clay are the tell-tale signs of how the climate, waters and landforms have changed over the last 100,000 years. And for at least 45,000 years humans have shared that journey. The ancient Willandra people thrived with the abundance of the lakes, then adapted to drier, hungrier times of the last ice age and survived to the present day. Their story can be discovered in the folds of the land, along with their fireplaces, burials, middens and tools. The people of Lake Mungo and the Willandra Lakes region have a long past that is important to the whole world as a UNESCO site in archaeological studies and human evolution.

The history of these fossil lakes is deeply entwined with what has happened in the dune fields, rivers and mountains hundreds of kilometres away. A geological stable region sediment from the

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Queensland mountains has washed through the Australian outback and accumulated, piling up like the pages in a history book, waiting to be read in this national park. But here it is not just the recent geologically record that is important.

Lake Mungo is one of the most important archaeological sites in Australia. A unique set of circumstances have created a landscape where it is possible to get an insight into Aboriginal life some 40,000 years ago. At that time Lake Mungo was one of series of large, deep, interlocking lakes teeming with large fish. It was 20 km long, 10 km wide and 15 m deep. On the lake's eastern shore sand dunes provided sheltered campsites. Not surprisingly Aboriginal hunters and gatherers settled on the shores, established campsites and enjoyed a healthy diet of fish, crustaceans and animals which came to drink at the water's edge.

About 16,000 years ago the lakes dried up leaving a 25 km-long sand dune, called a lunette, which stretched along the eastern edge of the lake and was, in places, up to 40 metres high. When shepherds, many of whom were Chinese, arrived in the area in the 1860s they called the lunette the Walls of China.

Lake Mungo's importance as a World heritage area is threefold.

- It has "one of the longest continual records of Aboriginal life in Australia " having been occupied for over 50,000 years.
- The skeletons found in the sands of the lunette are the "oldest known fully modern humans outside Africa" and,
- the skeleton of Mungo Woman (or Mungo I as she is officially known), which has been radiocarbon dated to around 40,000 years ago, "has provided the oldest evidence of ritual cremation in the world."

As a small group touring the lake and the National park, take time whilst at Lake Mungo to gaze across the dry lake bed to contemplate the idea that once, tens of thousands of years ago, here in the Australian outback was a important meeting place for the indigenous Aboriginal. Aboriginal people painted themselves with ochre, ate fish and mussels

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from the lake, buried and cremated their dead, cooked meat in simple hearths and ovens, sewed skins to make cloaks and shaped bones and stones into tools and weapons. If you want to glimpse what life was like for Aboriginal people when our European ancestors were still living in caves then the UNESCO site of Lake Mungo is a genuinely unforgettable experience.

About 40,000 years ago, Mungo Lady lived around the shores of Lake Mungo. A time of plenty was coming to an end at Willandra Lakes, when the basins were full of water and teeming with life. The human population was at its peak, and Mungo Lady was the daughter of many mothers – the generations before her that had lived at Lake Mungo since the Dreamtime. She collected bush tucker such as fish, shellfish, yabbies, wattle seeds and emu eggs, nourished her culture and taught her daughters the women's lore.

When Mungo Lady died, we know her family mourned for her. Her body was cremated, the remaining bones were crushed, burned again and then buried.

About 42,000 -40,000 years ago out here in what is now the Australian outback, Mungo Man lived around the shores of Lake Mungo with his family. A time of abundance in the Willandra Lakes system was drawing to a close, but he could still hunt many species of game, including some of the soon-to-be-extinct megafauna. Mungo Man cared for his Country and kept safe the special men's knowledge. By his lore and ritual activity, he kept the land strong and his culture alive.

When he was young Mungo Man lost his two lower canine teeth, possibly knocked out in a ritual. He grew into a man nearly 1.7m in height. Over the years his molar teeth became worn and scratched, possibly from eating a gritty diet or stripping the long leaves of water reeds with his teeth to make twine. As Mungo Man grew older his bones ached with arthritis, especially his right elbow, which was so damaged that bits of bone were completely worn out or broken away. The condition of arthritis was so advanced that he would not have been able to fully extend his arm or turn his hand properly. Such wear and tear is typical of people who have used a woomera to throw spears

over many years.

Mungo Man reached a good age for the hard life of a hunter-gatherer, and died when he was about 50. His family mourned for him, and carefully buried him in the lunette, on his back with his hands crossed in his lap, and sprinkled with red ochre. Mungo Man is the oldest known example in the world of such a ritual.

When Mungo Lady and Mungo Man turned up some 40 years ago they rocked the scientific community. They have been dated to 42,000 years old – the oldest human remains in Australia and some of the oldest modern humans in the world outside Africa.

And when 20,000 year old footprints of the Willandra people were found in 2003, they also rocked archaeological records. They are the only Pleistocene footprints in Australia and the most numerous yet found anywhere in the world.

## Ancient footprints

A key feature of the Meeting Place interpretation centre in the UNESCO World heritage site National park is the re-creation of part of the ancient human tracks that were re-discovered in 2003. The footprints record some frozen moments in the lives of Aboriginal people who travelled across a damp claypan around 20,000 years ago. This is the largest known collection in the world of such ancient human footprints.

Today these fragile relics are specially protected. The footprints are extremely precious to the people who are directly descended from those who made them so long ago, and they are important to all humanity. To let everyone experience something of the wonder of the tracks, a section has been reproduced as an accurate replica at the Meeting Place.

These finds are remarkable enough in the Australian archaeological record, but perhaps the most important thing about the Willandra Lakes is how such discoveries can be connected with the landscape and climate. Places like Mungo are rare, where changes in an environment

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can be matched with how people have lived there in a continuous record across vast ages.

The scientific evidence shows that Aboriginal people have lived at Mungo for at least 45,000 years. This is the dated age of the oldest stone artefacts that have been found so far, and represents a lineage that extends back over some 2000 generations. But many Aboriginal people say they have been here even longer, reaching back into the Dreamtime, perhaps forever. The long history of occupation at Mungo has combined with ideal conditions for the preservation of some types of relics to create an archaeological treasure house complete with Aboriginal rock art.

Today, the Paakantji, the Mutthi Mutthi, the Ngiyampaa and all Aboriginal people hold their Willandra ancestors and their story as precious gifts to be shared with all people.

The ability to go so far back in human settlement over such a large area makes for a truly fascinating and touching visit in the Mungo National park as part of this unique Australia tour. This escorted small group tour spends 2 days with the tour leader and local guides exploring and learning about the park, its unique wildlife and sees an amazing sunset, we hope.. in Australia's outback.

After Mungo National Park the group heads to Mildura, a town on the Murray River.

### **Mildura, a town on the Murray River.**

The area is thought to have been occupied by the Kureinji and Latje Latje Aborigines before white settlement. There is also evidence of the Paakantji, Ngiyampaa and Mutthi Mutthi tribal groups living in the area and their presence has been dated to 40,000 years ago. The first European in the vicinity was probably Charles Sturt who passed the present townsite when he travelled along the Murray River in early 1830. He reached Lake Alexandrina in February, 1830.

In this area of Northern Victoria the major event in agricultural settlement occurred late in the 19th century as the Victorian

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government considered irrigation options after the harsh drought of the 1870's. Two Canadians, William and George Chaffey who had been successful in setting up agricultural irrigation in California arrived at the invitation of the Government. The offer of £300,000 from the Victorian government as payment for the task of improving Mildura and the Mallee region over the next twenty years may have been a good inducement as well. This escorted tour learns how the Chaffey's planned Mildura like a town in California. The streets running east-west were given numerical names (First to Twenty-first Streets) and avenues which ran north-south were given North American names (San Mateo, Ontario). The town's main thoroughfare (Deakin Avenue) is reputedly the longest straight avenue in the country. They did not stop at street names. There was a plan to run trams through the town which meant the streets were designed to be particularly wide and the central median strip was enhanced with a band rotunda, a fountain, gum and palm trees all of which were planted by William Chaffey. In 1887 the new town was heavily promoted which resulted in the arrival of 3,300 settlers, many from Britain, by 1891. This was despite the fact that the nearest railway was 163 km away. The settlers cleared the land and dug irrigation channels. The Chaffey brothers imported two enormous engines for the pumping stations and water was raised from the Murray to irrigate the fields. So successful was the project that by 1893 the first fruit harvests were being transported to the markets in Melbourne. Problems with transportation resulted in the rapid development of a dried fruit industry and being on the Murray River meant the town quickly became an important river port.

Like many of the model towns in California, Mildura was alcohol free. It wasn't until 1918 that the first hotel, the Grand Hotel, was opened for business.

In spite of initial success the town suffered major economic problems (drought, plagues of rabbits, transportation problems) and by 1894 Chaffey Brothers Ltd was bankrupt. George Chaffey returned to the USA while his brother, William, remained and went on to establish a winery at Irymple in 1888 and become the town's first mayor in 1920. The group spend time visiting Rio Vista, the historic house built by

Charles Chaffey to continue this story.

Today the Mildura region, with a population of over 50,000, generates nearly \$3 billion in Gross Regional Product per annum. 17% of this is agriculture and 11% manufacturing.

Our second full day in Mildura this small group travels to the junction of the Darling and Murray Rivers at Wentworth. This small group escorted tour learn about the river traffic and take a short trip on a paddle steamer along the Murray including a lock gate passage. The group also visit the old jail designed by the Architect of the Sydney Chief post office and other historic buildings in Wentworth time permitting.

## Broken Hill & Menindee

From Mildura our itinerary takes this small group Australian outback tour up to Broken Hill, an iconic destination in outback Australia. The tour stops at Silverton just before Broken Hill. Silverton's mining days are long over, but it has a place in the folklore of followers of the Mad Max films. The following day we have a full day tour, walking Broken Hill, before travelling out to Menindee and the lakes adjacent to the Darling River. We visit the places where Burke and Wills stayed before heading into the unchartered outback as well as visiting one of the major sheep stations now a national park.

## Peterborough Trains and Burra

After two nights in Broken hill this escorted small group tour of South Australia heads back into Southern Australia, towards Burra via Peterborough. Our first break on today's guided tour is at Peterborough and to learn about this infamous railway intersection important to the town with its multiple gauges of rail track as an impediment to a Australia tour by rail or the transporting of goods.

Peterborough is a rare railway town where, because state governments could not agree on a standardised railway gauge, three railway gauges (broad – 5'3", standard 4'8 1/2" and narrow 3'6") once met from Sydney and the east coast, with the rail heading from Western Australia and Perth and of course South Australia. The town became hugely

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important as a railway link between the iron ore mines at Broken Hill and the iron and steel processing at Port Pirie. At its height over one hundred trains a day were passing through the town. It is therefore hardly surprising that it has a museum in a railway carriage and its prime tourist attraction is the "Steamtown" Heritage Rail Centre. It was 1970 when the first Sydney to Perth train, the Indian Pacific, passed through the crossing. By the start of the 20th century there were 70 trains a day just from Broken Hill passing along the track. And the Ghan started using the line from 1929 to go from Adelaide to Darwin. We spend time exploring the history of this town, now a shell of its former days.

We carry on to the state heritage town of Burra where we spend the night. Famous for the film *Breaker Morant*, copper mining, and beer! We have a tour of important historic sites in Burra, though like Peterborough this small group touring Burra is another Australian outback town with a long history of European settlement.

Burra, which calls itself 'An Historic Copper Town and the Merino Capital of the World', is a unique township. It did not become an official entity until 1940 when the tiny, separate mining communities of Aberdeen, New Aberdeen, Kooronga, Lluchwr, Redruth and Graham were drawn together under the name Burra. It was declared a State Heritage town in 1994 because of its outstanding historic buildings and the opportunity it offers for the visitor to understand a little of what life was like in a 19th century copper mining town.

## Return to Adelaide

The following day our small group touring program has us continue on our journey past the Barossa Valley and on to Adelaide to complete the circuit for this Australian tour. Odyssey Traveller offers a collection of Australian outback tours to the curious traveller with an all inclusive tour price.

## Articles about Australia published by Odyssey Traveller:

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- [The Kimberley: A Definitive Guide](#)
- [Uncovering the Ancient History of Aboriginal Australia](#)
- [Aboriginal Land Use in the Mallee](#)
- [Understanding Aboriginal Aquaculture](#)
- [Mallee and Mulga: Two Iconic and Typically Inland Australian Plant Communities \(By Dr. Sandy Scott\)](#)
- [The Australian Outback: A Definitive Guide](#)

For all the articles Odyssey Traveller has published for mature aged and senior travellers, click through [on this link](#).

## External articles to assist you on your visit to Australia:

- UNESCO: [Budj Bim Cultural Landscape and Willandra Lakes Region](#)
- [Finding Mungo Man: the moment Australia's story suddenly changed](#)
- [A 42,000-Year-Old Man Finally Goes Home](#)
- [Fish traps and stone houses: New archaeological insights into Gunditjmara use of the Budj Bim lava flow of southwest Victoria over the past 7000 years](#)
- ['A big jump': People might have lived in Australia twice as long as we thought](#)
- [Mildura, Victoria](#)
- [Righting the wrongs of the Sunraysia sultana's confusing history](#)
- [Burra, South Australia: Travel guide and things to do](#)

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## Highlights

1. Lake Mungo National Park, home to Mungo Woman and Mungo Man...dating back some 40,000 years.
2. Budj Bim World Heritage Site, the world's earliest example of aquaculture.
3. Naracoorte Caves, one of the world's most important fossil sites with fossils dating back over half a million years.
4. Mt Gambier's Blue Lake and beautiful Umpherston Sink Hole.
5. The Menindee Lakes wetland.

## Itinerary

### Day 1

**Locations:** Adelaide

**Overview:**

This afternoon you will meet with your program leader, and other members of the tour, in the lobby of our Adelaide hotel for introductions and a general briefing.

This will be followed by a Welcome Dinner in a local restaurant.

**Accommodation:**

Ibis Adelaide or similar

### Day 2

**Locations:** Adelaide

**Overview:**

Today we spend in Adelaide, beginning this morning with a walking tour and a visit to the South Australian Museum. Here we'll concentrate on the Aboriginal cultures gallery which celebrates the achievements of the world's oldest continuous living culture. The gallery features over 3,000 items across two floors, with pieces of material culture from

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communities across the country. For over 65,000 years Australia's first people successfully innovated and developed creative ways of living in one of the world's harshest environments. The wealth of information in this gallery includes boomerangs, bark paintings, shields, maps, photographs and some of the only intact bark canoes known to be in existence.

The Yuendumu Doors were included in the museum's collection in 2011 and are of considerable significance and interest. In the early 1980s in Yuendumu — a Central Australian Indigenous community on the edge of the Tanami Desert — a group of elders watching children struggle to engage with Western schooling did something remarkable. The elders painted Warlpiri dreaming stories on the doors of the school where children were receiving a Western education taught in English, rather than Warlpiri, and in classrooms, rather than out in the bush.

Our visit to the museum gives us an introduction to the Aboriginal culture which will help us to appreciate more fully many of the sites we visit later in the tour.

The afternoon will be free for you to independently explore more of what Adelaide has to offer.

**Accommodation:**

Ibis Adelaide or similar

**Day 3****Locations:** Burra**Overview:**

This morning after breakfast we head north to Burra, stopping in Kapunda on our way.

Since 1842 Kapunda has had three definable periods of development — it was created to develop copper mining; after the copper mining period it became the base for Sir Sidney Kidman's huge cattle and horse operations; and currently it is an important service centre for the surrounding rural area. It is still partly defined by copper mining with the huge Map Kernow (the Son of Cornwall) statue of a miner at the entrance to the town and the fascinating, and colourful, remnants of the

copper mines still an attraction for visitors.

Sidney Kidman's father died when the boy was only eighteen months old and his childhood with a drunken step-father was not an easy one. In 1870, at the age of thirteen, he left home with a one eyed horse and only a few shillings in his pockets. From these beginnings he went on to build up the world's largest privately owned cattle empire. By 1914 he controlled station country considerably greater in area than England and nearly as great as Victoria. Eringa, a handsome house dating from 1879 with impressive ironwork, was the home of Sir Sidney Kidman and when he left Kapunda in 1921 he donated the house to the Department of Education. It became the local high school in 1923.

In Kapunda we will visit the information centre to learn more about Kidman and his story. We'll also have time for morning coffee and a walk around some of the town's historic buildings before continuing to Burra via Anlaby Station, home to SA's oldest merino stud.

Burra, where we spend the next two nights, is listed as a state heritage town. The town is famous for the film Breaker Morant, copper mining and beer! It was, however, declared a state heritage town in 1994 because of its outstanding historic buildings and the opportunity it offers for visitors to understand a little of what life was like in a 19<sup>th</sup> century Australian copper mining town.

**Accommodation:**

Paxton square Cottages or similar

**Day 4**

**Locations:** Burra

**Overview:**

We have a full day to explore the town's most important sites. Burra, which calls itself "An Historic Copper Town and Merino Capital of the World", did not become an official entity until 1940 when the tiny, separate mining communities of Aberdeen, New Aberdeen, Kooringa, Llchwyr, Redruth and Graham were drawn together under the name of Burra. Many of the most important sites, however, date back to the 19<sup>th</sup>

century when copper mining ruled the town.

Today we have a passport to explore much of what Burra has to offer including such important local sites as the Monster Mine, the Redruth Gaol, the Unicorn Brewery and the Dugouts which provided primitive living conditions for many of the miners.

**Accommodation:**

Paxton square Cottages or similar

**Day 5**

**Locations:** Broken Hill

**Overview:**

Today we head north again to Broken Hill, with a stop on our way to explore the railway town of Peterborough.

Peterborough was one of those rare railway towns where, because the different states could not agree on a uniform rail gauge, three different gauges (broad, standard and narrow) met. Because of this the town became hugely important as a railway link between the mines at Broken Hill and the iron and steel processing at Port Pirie, as well as between Adelaide and Alice Springs. At its height over one hundred trains a day were passing through the town. This morning we'll stop at the "Steam-town" Heritage Rail Centre to learn more about the town's rail history.

We'll also take time to visit the Town Carriage Museum. Set in a railway carriage in the main street, this museum is all about the town of Peterborough – past, present and future. It offers the chance to see what makes the town special through a collection of 18 artifacts. These have been chosen to represent events in the town's history, people of significance and aspects of life in the town. Presented together in a simple chronology – a timeline of sorts – through to the present day, they offer a complete picture and illustrate that this town is diverse, interesting and about much more than just railways. The display occupies the main compartment of the Commonwealth Carriage, with 18 small cabinets and information panels.

We'll have an early lunch in Peterborough before continuing to Broken Hill. After checking into our Broken Hill hotel, we'll drive out to Silverton

for a look around this once booming mining town.

Silverton, located just 25 kilometres from Broken Hill, was briefly the hub of the district. It thrived back in the late 1800s with mining claims everywhere, and the population reaching a peak of 3,000. It was here that mining giant BHP was first established before there was even a town at Broken Hill. By 1901, Silverton was declining as deposits dwindled, but Broken Hill boomed. Barely five decades later the city was producing more than 10 per cent of the entire world's lead. Today, more than 50 million tonnes of lead and zinc, and 20,000 tonnes of silver have been extracted from northwards of 200 million tonnes of ore.

Now there are very few permanent residents in Silverton, though thousands of tourists flock to the area each year to explore the town's historic buildings.

**Accommodation:**

The Astra or similar

**Day 6****Locations:** Broken Hill**Overview:**

After breakfast this morning we take a guided tour through the city centre, visiting some of the most important historic buildings. Most of Broken Hill's notable buildings are in Argent Street and the Civic Group is regarded as a particularly fine example of a concentration of public buildings. Some of the most notable buildings include the Post Office, the Town Hall, the Court House and the Palace Hotel.

Located at the corner of Argent and Chloride Streets, the red-brick Post Office (1891), was designed by Colonial Architect, James Barnet. *The Heritage of Australia* describes it as "the main body of the structure is subservient to its massive tower which stands on the corner of Argent and Chloride Streets and around which is wrapped a footpath veranda with corner balcony supported on paired timber columns. The square tower is capped by a decorative mansard roof and houses four clock faces."

Next door to the Post Office, as the central part of the Civic Group, is the extraordinarily ornate Town Hall (1890-91). *The Heritage of Australia*

describes it as “designed by Adelaide architect Whittall in the Victorian Classical Revival idiom and built of stone... it features an open veranda on two levels with projecting porch and balcony.”

The unpretentious Court House was built of stuccoed brick in 1889. It was designed by Colonial Architect James Barnet. *The Heritage of Australia* describes it as “typical in design of late Victorian courthouses, it combines an unadorned two-storey pedimented front with single-storey side wings, flanked with deeply recessed verandas supported on paired timber columns, and a hipped roof. The symmetrical composition is dominated by the two-storey court room, the entry to which is heralded by a fine coat of arms at window level.”

After touring the city, and taking time out for morning coffee, we’ll rejoin our coach for the drive out to the Menindee Lakes.

Following thousands of years of Aboriginal habitation, the Menindee Lakes and Darling River became a lifeline for early European explorers in one of the world’s most arid regions. Major Thomas Mitchell, Charles Sturt and Bourke and Wills all used the lakes on expeditions between 1835 and 1860.

Later, it was thought that the Darling River would be navigable and provide a suitable route to develop Australia’s interior. The township of Menindee became an important access point to the outback. The flows in the Darling River, however, proved unreliable, causing difficulties with navigation and water supply. For example, the paddle steamer Jane Eliza took 3 years (from 1883 to 1886) to complete a voyage between Morgan in South Australia and Bourke in New South Wales.

The township of Menindee was founded in the 1850s and the first business to open its doors was the Menindee Hotel, now known as the Maidens Hotel. It’s the second oldest hotel in NSW and Burke and Wills stopped here in 1860 as they made their way north, searching for a route across the continent.

Just outside of town, we’ll stop at the exact place where Burke and Wills camped beside Pamamaroo Creek and visit the Old Kinchega Homestead which tells the story of the region’s Aboriginal and European heritage. Once the heart of a vast sheep station, the station remains paint a captivating picture of life in the late 19th century. We’ll be able to almost step back in time at the Kinchega Woolshed, built in 1875 from corrugated iron and river red gum. The Woolshed is a well

preserved piece of Australian pastoral heritage, with six million sheep shorn there during its 97 year history.

We return to Broken Hill in the late afternoon.

Tonight you'll be free to find dinner in one of Broken Hill's many restaurants.

**Accommodation:**

The Astra or similar

**Day 7**

**Locations:** Mildura

**Overview:**

This morning we leave Broken Hill and head south to Mildura where we'll spend the next two nights.

Before arriving in Mildura we'll stop on the NSW side of the border to explore historic Wentworth. Although much smaller than Mildura, Wentworth has a number of attractions for us to uncover.

Wentworth is situated at the junction of the Murray and Darling rivers. In Junction Park you'll have the opportunity to climb the viewing platform to look down on the confluence of the two rivers. The Darling is a clay-based river and its milky appearance contrasts starkly to that of the Murray, providing a spectacle that shouldn't be missed.

The first Europeans to travel through the region were the explorers Captain Charles Sturt and his party in 1830. Following Sturt the junction became a crossing point for settlers and overland drovers. With the arrival of river steamers in 1853 a port was established which became the third largest port in Australia and the largest in the inland. The town site was approved in 1859 and many of the buildings which followed soon after, still exist today.

We'll take time to visit the Old Wentworth Gaol which is the oldest of all Australian designed gaols. It was built between 1879 and 1881 and operated until 1927. Inside the gaol we'll gain some idea of what conditions were like for prisoners, as much of the gaol remains in its

original condition.

We'll have lunch in Wentworth before continuing to Mildura where you'll have the rest of the afternoon to explore at your leisure.

**Accommodation:**

Quality Hotel Mildura Grand or similar

**Day 8**

**Locations:** Mildura

**Overview:**

This morning we have a guided walk/drive through Mildura, with particular emphasis on the role the Chaffey brothers played on the region's development.

After the harsh drought of the 1870s the Victorian government (this was before the Federation of the Australian states in 1901) began to search for irrigation options. Canadians, George and William Chaffey were developing an irrigation scheme in California when they met Alfred Deakin, then a Victorian Cabinet Minister. Deakin, impressed with their work, encouraged them to come to Australia to work on an irrigation scheme on the Murray River. The Victorian government offered an inducement of £300,000 for the task of improving Mildura and the Mallee over the next 20 years.

Despite a number of setbacks the irrigation project prospered, resulting in many of the features notable in Mildura today. The Chaffey plans included wide streets, an agricultural college, parks and churches. Our guided tour will take us on the "Chaffey Trail" visiting places such as Rio Vista, the historic home once lived in by W B Chaffey and his family, as well as the Mildura Grand Hotel, originally the Mildura Coffee Palace. (Mildura was established as a temperance colony despite the fact that the Chaffey brothers planted grapes and established a winery!)

After a break for lunch we take to the river on a paddle vessel. We have a two hour cruise downstream which takes us through Lock 11. A commentary provides us with an insight into the local environment and

the history of paddle steamers in the region.

Tonight you have the opportunity to explore the local restaurant scene on your own, or take “pot luck” with your programme leader.

**Accommodation:**

Quality Hotel Mildura Grand

**Day 9**

**Locations:** Mungo National Park

**Overview:**

This morning we have a leisurely start to our day. After breakfast you might like to explore a little more of the town, perhaps by following the Art Deco trail, or by taking a walk along the river.

Mid-morning we rejoin our coach and drive to Chateau Mildura, established by the Chaffey Brothers, and one of the local wineries for a tasting and lunch beside the river.

In the afternoon we continue to Lake Mungo World Heritage site.

Mungo National Park is a 110,967 hectare archaeological and geomorphological site of international significance. Lake Mungo is the second largest in a system of nineteen dry lakes which were once part of Willandra Creek and is now part of the Willandra Lakes World Heritage Area which was declared in 1981. The dry lake is unforgettable. The stark, eerie, desert landscape; the vastness of the flat lake bed; the sparse vegetation and the unique crinkled and fluted dunes and ridges make the place look like a strange moonscape.

Lake Mungo is important for three reasons: It has “one of the longest continual records of Aboriginal life in Australia” having been occupied for over 50,000 years; the skeletons found in the sands of the lunette are the “oldest known fully modern humans outside Africa”; and the skeleton of Mungo Woman (or Mungo I as she is officially known), has been radiocarbon dated to around 40,000 years ago and “has provided



the oldest evidence of ritual cremation in the world.”

For the next two nights we stay at Mungo Lodge.

Dinner tonight will be at the Lodge.

**Accommodation:**

Mungo Lodge or similar

**Day 10**

**Locations:** Mungo National Park

**Overview:**

We have the whole day to explore the National Park. There are a variety of walking tracks which can be explored and our coach will take us to a number of the most memorable sites.

This afternoon we take a guided sunset tour before returning for dinner at the Lodge.

**Accommodation:**

Mungo Lodge or similar

**Day 11**

**Locations:** Balranald

**Overview:**

This morning we leave Lake Mungo and drive south to Balranald, some 150 kilometres to the south over a partially sealed road.

Balranald is a small town on the Murrumbidgee River and developed because this was a place where the river could be easily forded.

Balranald was first settled by Europeans in 1847 but had been home to the Mutthi Mutthi First Nation people, who called the area ‘Nap Nap’, for may thousands of years previously.

On arrival in Balranald we’ll find that, for such a small town, there is a surprising amount to see. The Discovery Centre precinct includes three historic buildings, the Malcolm Building Museum, the Old Balranald Gaol and the first school in the area. The rest of the morning will be

spent exploring the town or taking one of the heritage walks.

After lunch we'll rejoin our coach for a guided visit to Yanga National Park, including the historic homestead and woolshed. Located to the west of Balranald, Yanga National Park is one of the state's newest national parks. Established in 2007 it covers 667,334 hectares, mostly wetlands, with 170 km of the Murrumbidgee River. The government purchased the land primarily because "It is one of the most significant wetland habitats for waterbirds in eastern Australia and has supported some of the largest waterbird breeding colonies in Australia and is home to the State's largest known population of the endangered Southern Bell frog."

We return to Balranald in the late afternoon.

**Accommodation:**

Balranald Club Motel or similar

**Day 12**

**Locations:** Halls Gap

**Overview:**

Today's journey takes us across the NSW border and into Victoria at Swan Hill, before we continue south to the Grampians town of Halls Gap.

The original custodians of the lands around what is now called Swan Hill are the Latji Latji, Tati Tati, Wamba Wamba, Barapa Barapa and the Wadi Wadi Nations. Before European settlement, the Wamba-Wamba people settled in the area around the Loddon River, through to Matakupaat (Swan Hill). Major Thomas Mitchell named the area 'Swan Hill' when he camped here in 1836 and was kept up all night by the noisy swans roaming about.

Our first stop this morning will be at the Swan Hill Pioneer Settlement Museum. As the museum's website explains: "The Pioneer Settlement lets you experience Australian history first hand. You will find real-life Mallee cottages, a hotel, schools and shops, plus our enormous collection of working tractors and machinery – sourced mostly from the local area. You can feel the heat in the blacksmith shop, listen to the sounds of the old Pianola or take a ride through our Mallee township on

a horse and cart. As you wander the site, you can also chat to our staff and volunteers, all looking the part in costumes of the period. The Pioneer Settlement opened in 1966 after a joint community and government effort to recognise the unique history of our Murray Mallee region. By the 1970s, the Pioneer Settlement was one of the most popular tourism destinations in Victoria, if not Australia, and the concept has been emulated around the country.”

There are plenty of places for morning coffee or tea at the museum and we'll have time to explore before heading south again (with a few detours) towards this evening's accommodation. Our first detour will be to Sea Lake in the heart of the Mallee. Sea Lake has recently joined the Victorian Silo Art Trail and we stop to admire *The Space in Between*, the work of street artists Drapl and The Zookeeper, which pays homage to nearby Lake Tyrrell and the Boorong People, with their deep and rich connection to both the night sky and the 120,000 year old salt lake.

Lake Tyrrell, just seven kilometres north of Sea Lake, is Victoria's largest salt lake covering some 20,860 hectares. The reflective surface of the shallow, ancient lake can make for some amazing photography, and there is evidence of ongoing Indigenous occupation, going back 45,000 years.

As our small group tour continues south towards Halls Gap, we'll stop to admire more silo art at small towns such as Lascelles, Brim and Sheep Hills. Our last stop will be for art of a very different kind, the ancient rock art figure of Bunjil with his two dogs at Bunjil's Shelter near Stawell.

Dinner tonight will be in a local restaurant.

**Accommodation:**

TBA

## Day 13

**Locations:** Port Fairy

### Overview:

Today we visit Budj Bim, the second of our World Heritage sites, for a guided tour of this outstanding region.

Located in the heart of Gunditjmara Country in south-western Victoria, the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape contains one of the world's most extensive and oldest aquaculture systems. At least 6,600 years ago Gunditjmara first constructed these extensive, sophisticated aquaculture systems along the Budj Bim lava flow, and many of these systems are still in use today. Gunditjmara knowledge and practices have endured and continue to be passed down through their Elders and are recognisable across the wetlands of the Budj Bim Cultural Landscape.

The Gunditjmara people engineered the ingenious system to trap, store and harvest kooyang – short-finned eel. Weirs, holding and growing ponds, and stone channels, some of which are hundreds of metres long, were dug out of basalt lava flow from the now dormant Budj Bim volcano.

The Gunditjmara people crafted long eel baskets, made of river reeds and spear grass to regulate and trap the eels according to weight and size. Baskets were also used to carry the eels, which fed and sustained the lives of Gunditjmara for many generations. These engineered wetlands provided the economic basis to sustain large groups of people living in villages of stone huts along the lava flow and allowed them to undertake trade.

After a morning spent in the Budj Bim National Park we continue to Port Fairy. Here you'll have some free time to explore this historic fishing town.

Many of Port Fairy's early buildings remain from its days as a port for sealers and whalers back in the 1800s, and many of those buildings can be viewed in the town's commercial centre along Bank Street and Sackville Street. Port Fairy is home to Victoria's oldest licensed hotel, the Caledonian Inn, which dates back to 1844.

The main focal point of Port Fairy is the Moyne River as it approaches the coast. The Fishermans Wharf area along the river is lined with

boats and fishing craft, and good views of river activity can be enjoyed from the footbridge over the Moyne. Another good viewing spot is from the historic fortifications at Battery Hill which is located the southern end of Griffiths Street.

**Accommodation:**

Seacombe House or similar

**Day 14****Locations:** Mt Gambier**Overview:**

This morning we leave Port Fairy and head west into South Australia, driving as far as Mt Gambier, just over the border. Mt Gambier, the second largest city in South Australia, is an important rural centre which is characterised by a large number of attractive, historic buildings and the major attraction of the Blue Lake. The city's primary appeal lies in exploring the lakes and sinkholes – unique and remarkable formations – as well as admiring the impressive number of significant historic buildings. While in Mt Gambier our tour will take us to a number of the most famous sites of the region including the Blue Lake and Umpherston Sinkhole.

The Blue Lake occupies one of the craters of the extinct Mt Gambier volcano. Early each November, the lake's sombre blue, which is in evidence during the winter months, mysteriously changes to an intense deep turquoise blue almost overnight. The colouring remains until late February, when it gradually changes. From late March, it returns to a distinct sombre blue colouring that remains until the following November. Experts attribute this phenomenon to the presence of microscopic calcite crystals which scatter the light entering the lake and change seasonally. A chemical reaction occurs in early summer when the surface is warmed, but the deeper water remains cold.

The Umpherston Sinkhole, also known, as the Sunken Garden was once a cave formed through dissolution of the limestone. The sinkhole was created when the top of the chamber collapsed downwards. Now the topsoil down on the floor forms the perfect environment for the sunken garden, originally created by James Umpherston around 1886. We will be able to appreciate the beauty, size and depth of the

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<https://www.odysseytraveller.com.au>

Umpherston Sinkhole from the viewing platforms at the top of the sinkhole, then (for those so inclined), walk down into the sinkhole, along the terraces and behind the hanging vines.

There will be time in Mt Gambier to explore the museums, climb the Centenary Tower (if you have the energy) or visit Caves Garden in the town centre.

Mt Gambier has a number of good restaurants so you can take your pick.

**Accommodation:**

Commodore on the Park or similar

**Day 15**

**Locations:** Naracoorte

**Overview:**

We leave Mt Gambier this morning and head towards Naracoorte and our third World Heritage site.

Before reaching the caves at Naracoorte we'll take time to stop at Bool Lagoon, one of the largest and most diverse freshwater lagoon systems in southern Australia. This seasonal wetland is home to a wide range of wildlife and provides essential drought refuge for many rare and endangered bird species. The boardwalk, extending 500 metres over the wetlands, gives you the feeling of walking on water. Brolgas, commonly associated with northern Australia, are perhaps the most spectacular of the 150 species of birds that visit this area. We'll be able to enjoy the magnificent scenery and listen carefully for the creatures of the wetlands, especially the insects and frogs.

The Naracoorte Caves, recognised as one of the world's most complete fossil sites, became a World Heritage site in 1994. "The caves preserve the most complete fossil record we have for this period of time, spanning several ice ages, the arrival of humans in the area and the extinction of Australia's iconic Megafauna roughly 50,000 years ago."

The importance of the fossil record and its relevance to science is showcased on the Victoria Fossil Cave and World Heritage guided tours and in the Wonambi Fossil Centre, where the ancient world of

megafauna is brought to life.

In the Victoria Fossil Cave the remains of a staggering 130 different species of mammals, reptiles, birds and frogs have been discovered. It is a repository of near-perfect fossilised skeletons of ancient megafauna, including species such as *Thylacoleo carnifex* (Marsupial Lion) and the Diprotodon.

After an afternoon spent in the caves we continue to Naracoorte where we spend the night.

Dinner tonight will be in a local restaurant.

**Accommodation:**

The Avenue Inn or similar

**Day 16**

**Locations:** Adelaide

**Overview:**

The last full day of our tour will be spent travelling back to Adelaide. There are, however, a number of interesting places for our small group tour to still experience.

Our first stop this morning will be at Kingston SE (ie Kingston in the south-east to distinguish it from other Kingstons). Here we'll have time to admire the Big Lobster, take a walk along the jetty or perhaps take the chance to grab a morning coffee.

From Kingston we head north along the coast to the Coorong National Park, famous for much more than just the pelicans featured in *Storm Boy*. Established in 1966, the Coorong National Park is a spectacular saline lagoon stretching 140km. It is separated from the Southern Ocean by sand dunes and is internationally significant under the Ramsar agreement as a migratory wader and waterfowl refuge.

On our way north we'll stop at Salt Creek, where the creek flows into the Coorong, for the chance to walk and explore, and again at Jacks Point. Jacks Point is home to a large pelican breeding colony that can be viewed from a purpose built observatory deck just a short walk from

the car park. (Binoculars may be necessary for good viewing.)

From Meningie on Lake Albert, we'll continue via Taillem Bend and Murray Bridge to Adelaide.

Our farewell dinner tonight will be in a local restaurant.

**Accommodation:**

Ibis Adelaide or similar

**Day 17**

**Locations:** Adelaide

**Overview:**

Our tour finishes this morning after breakfast.

## Inclusions / Exclusions

**What's included in our Tour**

- 16 nights accommodation.
- 16 breakfasts, 3 picnic lunches, 6 dinners.
- Transport by modern and comfortable 4wd or other vehicle suitable for the highway conditions.
- Entrances and sightseeing as specified.
- Services of Tour Leader for the duration of tour.
- Detailed Preparatory Information.

**What's not included in our Tour**

- Return airfares to Adelaide.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Items of a personal nature, such as telephone calls and laundry



## Level 2 - Moderate

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

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