



From  
**\$9,350** AUD

Single Room  
 \$10,850 AUD

Twin Room  
 \$9,350 AUD

Prices valid until  
 30th December 2022

**15 days**  
 Duration

**New South Wales,  
 Queensland**  
 Destination

**Level 2 - Moderate**  
 Activity

# Small group tour of outback Queensland

Mar 05 2023 to Mar 19 2023

## Small group Australian Outback tour of Queensland

Get well and truly off the beaten track on Odyssey Traveller's 15-day small group Australian outback tours of Queensland. Away from the usual tourist centres – Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the Great Barrier Reef, Cairns, Port Douglas, Mt Isa and the Daintree Rainforest – our Odyssey Travellers will discover the big skies, stunning pastoral and desert landscapes, and fascinating history of the outback communities



07-Dec-2022

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of western Queensland with your tour guide.

Our small group tours of the Australian outback in Queensland begin in the regional centre of Dubbo , New South Wales. We chose to start in Dubbo, so that we can head north to south into Queensland and back, pausing along the way to explore and learn at each stop on day tour (s) with local guides, as we head up into North Queensland. This escorted tour is suitable for the mature and senior traveler whether as a couple or solo traveler

***This, like all Odyssey Traveller small group tours is limited to 15 people.*** As a tour company in the current environment, we are committed to small group travel that is safe for you and your fellow traveller rather than being a member of larger group tours.

Leaving Dubbo, our outback Australia tours itinerary follows the path of the iconic Cobb & Co. stagecoach, heading towards Cunnamulla via Brewarrina on the Barwon river. On the road to Brewarrina, we stop off to see one of the world's oldest surviving man-made structures: the Brewarrina Fish Traps . The Ngemba people are the custodians of the fish traps, a complex aquaculture network estimated to be over 40, 000 years old. An elaborate network of rock weirs and pools form a series of complex dry-stone walls and holding ponds, stretching for around half a kilometre along the Barwon riverbed. For the Aboriginal people of western and northern New South Wales, the fish traps and surrounds are extremely significant for their spiritual, cultural, traditional and symbolic meanings. The creation of the fish traps, and the laws governing their use, helped shape the spiritual, political, social, ceremonial and trade relationships between Aboriginal groups from across the greater landscape. Brewarrina was one of the great Aboriginal meeting places of eastern Australia .

The outback town of Bourke (though not strictly included on the tour ) has shaped the history of many of the places we will visit. Established in the mid-1950s as a developing town on the Darling River, by the 1890s Bourke became the focus of the world's wool industry. The Darling River had more than eighty boats transporting wool through the outback to ports like Adelaide . With the opening of railways in the early

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20th century – which didn't have to deal with the unreliability of river flows – the end of river traffic in outback Australia was in decline.

Bourke today is a town with an outback spirit, on the edge of the wilderness, and with a great sense of Australian adventure in its historical, cultural, and geographic significance.

### **Cunnamulla on the Warrego River**

Our outback Aussie tours continue with a day tour of the town of Cunnamulla on the Warrego River. The township of Cunnamulla was created by Cobb & Co. on September 3, 1879, when the first coach drove through from Bourke. Before Cobb & Co came to the region, the Kunja people settled in the region thanks to a reliable waterhole; and after European colonisation, the area became a place where two major stock routes joined. Today, Cunnamulla is the only surviving south-west town along the original route. The group with the tour director takes a walking tour to learn about the unique outback history and stories behind the many historical buildings including, hotels, saddlery, Tonkin House, churches and the Warrego Watchman.

### **Longreach**

The following day we journey further into North Queensland to Longreach via Charleville, Tambo Blackhall, Emmet and Isisford. Our Queensland outback small group tour spends two nights in Longreach, the home of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, which showcases the history and culture of life in outback Australia, perhaps this is the home of the Australian adventure. As well our day tour of Longreach includes the Qantas founder's museum. Longreach was one of the founding centres for Qantas, the third oldest airline in the world (after KLM and Avianca), founded on 16 November 1920. One of the airline's original hangars remains in use at Longreach Airport and is listed on the Australian National Heritage List. The Qantas Founders Museum also includes among its displays a decommissioned Qantas Boeing 747-200 aircraft.

## Winton; Dinosaurs and home of Waltzing matilda

From Longreach, the tour makes a short trip (two hours) to Winton, where we are based for two nights. Winton epitomises the spirit of Australian outback tours. We visit the North Gregory Hotel, known as the 'Queen of the Outback', which has an impressive history. The first public performance of 'Waltzing Matilda' was here on April 6, 1895 (the story of which is told at the Waltzin' Matilda centre, the world's only museum dedicated to a song) and in the 1920s clandestine meetings helped launch a little airline known as QANTAS... During World War II, future American president Lyndon Johnson was forced to stay here, when forced to ditch his plane. The dining room – where you can enjoy a traditional outback dinner – features original etchings by acclaimed artist Daphne Mayo. Winton is also home to the red-browed pardalote, found across Queensland and the Northern Territory, and the elusive rusty grasswren, a small, long-tailed bird with reddish-brown upper parts (related to the Kalkadoon Grasswren, found in the Mt Isa region).

Winton is also the dinosaur capital of Australia. We visit the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum to learn about the Cretaceous sauropods that roamed the Winton area 95 million years ago. The dinosaurs were found on the property of a man named David Elliott – amazingly, in the form of an almost complete skeleton of a Sauropod! After our visit to the Dinosaurs Museum, we learn more about dinosaurs on a day trip to Lark Quarry, one of the most fascinating tourism centres in Queensland's outback. 95 million years ago, Lark Quarry was part of a great river plain, with sandy channels, swamps and lakes brimming with freshwater mussels, lungfish and crocodiles. Rainfall was over a metre per year, so the surrounding lowland forest was lush and green.

The fossil remains at Lark Quarry tell an incredible story. On the day, our drama unfolds, herds of small, two-legged dinosaurs came to drink at the lake. There were at least one hundred fifty dinosaurs of two different kinds, carnivorous coelurosaurs about the size of chickens, and larger plant-eating ornithopods, roughly the size of an emu. The harmony was broken when a huge meat-eating theropod, smaller than a Tyrannosaurus, approached the lake. It slowed, saw the other dinosaurs gathered at water's edge, and then turned and charged. The stampeding herd of smaller dinosaurs left a chaotic mass of footprints

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in the mud as they ran to escape. Today, these footprints are an extraordinary record of life in the times when the land here was part of Gondwanaland, the great southern supercontinent, rather than Queensland, Australia.

## Hughenden

From Winton, we continue the dinosaur trail to Hughenden, a classic Queensland outback Australia town, which owes its existence to the railway line and surrounding cattle grazing land. Its primary appeal is its position on the edge of Australia's ancient land sea, which existed between 95 and 120 million years ago, and left a rich supply of fossils in the area. The most important fossil discovery has been of a *Muttaburrasaurus*, today displayed prominently in the FlindersDiscovery Centre. The skeleton was the first whole fossil to be found in Australia.

The traditional owners of the land here are the Yirandali people. What is now known as Hughenden was first reached by Europeans in 1861-2 when William Landsborough and Frederick Walker arrived looking for Burke and Wills, who had disappeared in the bush the year before. The Hughenden Showgrounds are home to the historic Coolabah Tree, which is linked to two relief missions who went on search for Burke and Wills. Both expeditions blazed the tree on their way to the Flinders River, triggering the growth of settlement in the area. Hughenden is as far North as this adventure in the outback comes. There will be time to sit on a verandah somewhere to watch a spectacular sunset before we begin the journey south.

## Porcupine National Park

On our second day in Hughenden the group makes a day tour to Porcupine National Park. This national park covers over 55 square kilometres of coloured sandstone desert, vine forests, and deep permanent waterholes, which contrast strikingly with the savanna plains surrounding Porcupine Creek and Porcupine Gorge or canyon. Exploring on foot, we visit the Gorge on a moderate 90-minute walk over flat terrain.

## Barcaldine

Heading south from Hughenden, we spend the night in Barcaldine. The name Barcaldine originates from the Oban region in Scotland and is pronounced bar-call-din. Barcaldine is home to the Tree of Knowledge, which marks the birth of the labour movement in Australia. The tree grew outside the Railway Station for around 180 years until 2006, when sadly, it was poisoned by an unknown culprit. Today, the famous tree has been preserved and placed under an award-winning structure that gives the illusion of a canopy over the Tree. Head to the Tree at night for the best views, as the memorial is lit beautifully by special lighting.

In Barcaldine, we spend the afternoon learning about the origins of the Australian Labour Party, and view architectural curiosities, such as the masonic lodge – seemingly out of place in this small central west Queensland town.

## Carnarvon National Park

Travelling back into the Australian outback, we head to Carnarvon National Park, where we spend two nights. Carnarvon Gorge is a rainforest oasis in the semi-arid heart of Central Queensland, and a major camping ground and centre of outback tourism. Towering white sandstone cliffs form a spectacular steep-sided gorge with narrow, vibrantly coloured and lush side-gorges. Boulder-strewn Carnarvon Creek winds through the gorge. The gorge is home to a range of significant plant and animal species, many of them relics of cooler, wetter times. Remnant rainforest flourishes in the sheltered side-gorges while endemic Carnarvon fan palms *Livistona nitida*, ancient cycads, ferns, flowering shrubs and gum trees line the main gorge. Grassy open forest grows on the cliff tops. The creeks attract a wide variety of animals, including more than 173 species of bird.

Rock art on sandstone overhangs is a fragile reminder of local Aboriginal peoples ' long and continuing connection with the ancient landscape of the gorge. Ochre stencils, rock engraving and freehand paintings make up some of the finest Aboriginal rock art imagery in Australia. We will have the opportunity with a tour guide to view and learn about these paintings at Cathedral Cave, which lies at the end of

the main path through the Gorge, and is indicated by archaeological evidence to be the main campsite for indigenous people who used the Gorge.

## Lightning Ridge

After this stay at Carnarvon National Park, we travel to Lightning Ridge, New South Wales for a half day tour and overnight stay. In the 1870s, black opal was discovered in the area, drawing prospectors (over 700 km by foot) from the opal town of White Cliffs near Wilcannia, hoping to make their fortune. At first, the black opals proved to be little more than curiosities to the gem buyers in Sydney, but over time their value was recognised and due to their scarcity, they are recognised as the most-valuable form of opal. Lightning Ridge remains the only town in the world to produce the elusive black opal. In town, we tour a mine, explore the opal community in the main town, and relax in the Artesian hot water spring. Lightning ridge has an Aussie outback feel when you pause to look around and take in the scenery.

Odyssey Traveller's outback adventure comes to an end with two nights in Dubbo. We spend the morning at the Dundullimal Homestead, a heritage-listed former pastoral station converted into a cultural facility and house museum. The afternoon is at your leisure before a farewell group dinner in the evening.

## Articles about Australia published by Odyssey Traveller:

- [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](#)

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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 Dubbo & Outback Queensland:

- [Attractions in Dubbo: where to eat, stay, and stop](#)
- [Wellington Caves and Phosphate Mine](#)
- [Outback Towns | Outback Queensland](#)
- [The 10 Best Things to do in Outback Queensland](#)
- [Three Western Queensland Towns Worth Visiting](#)

## Highlights

1. Visit Brewarrina, on the Barwon river to see and learn about the Ngemba people fish traps, one of the oldest known surviving man made structures.
2. Winton, goes beyond the dinosaur fossil with analysis and interpretation of a stampede on mudflats now in the geologic record.
3. Explore Barcaldine, the tree of knowledge and the place where the labour party was founded in Australia.
4. Carnarvon Gorge National park shows the group first class well preserved Aboriginal rock art .
5. In Lightning ridge learn about the history of the black opal .

## Itinerary

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## Day 1

**Locations:** Dubbo

### Overview:

Having made your own way to Dubbo and to our hotel we will meet later today as group to discuss the tour itinerary. You may wish to explore Dubbo for a couple of hours prior to the meeting.

In the late afternoon we'll meet with the tour director for a briefing on the itinerary followed by welcome dinner at a local restaurant for you and your fellow traveller as a small group.

### Accommodation:

Quest Dubbo or similar

## Day 2

**Locations:** Cunnamulla

### Overview:

Leaving Dubbo smartly in the morning, our outback Australia tour itinerary follows the path of the iconic Cobb & Co. stagecoach, heading towards Cunnamulla via Brewarrina on the Barwon river. At Brewarrina, we stop off to see one of the world's oldest surviving man-made structures: the [Brewarrina Fish Traps](#).

**Brewarrina Aboriginal Fish Traps** are heritage-listed [Australian Aboriginal](#) fish traps on the [Barwon River](#) at [Brewarrina](#), [Brewarrina Shire](#), [New South Wales](#), Australia. They are also known as **Baiame's Ngunnhu**, **Nonah**, or **Nyemba Fish Traps**.

The traditional Aboriginal fish traps at Brewarrina, also known as Baiame's Ngunnhu [pronounced By-ah-mee's noon-oo], comprises a nearly half-kilometre long complex of dry-stone walls and holding ponds within the Barwon River in north west NSW. The fish traps are the largest group recorded in Australia and are arranged in an unusual and innovative way that allowed fish to be herded and caught during both high and low river flows. According to Aboriginal tradition, the ancestral creation being, Baiame, generated the design by throwing his net over the river and, with his two sons Booma-ooma-nowi and Ghinda-inda-mui, building the fish traps to this design.

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Ngemba people are the custodians of the fishery and continue to use and have responsibilities for the fish traps. It is said that Baiame instructed these responsibilities to be shared with other Traditional Owner groups who periodically gathered in large numbers at the fish traps for subsistence, cultural and spiritual reasons. The place is extremely significant to the Aboriginal people of western and northern NSW for whom it is imbued with spiritual, cultural, traditional and symbolic meanings. The creation of the fish traps, and the laws governing their use, helped shape the spiritual, political, social, ceremonial and trade relationships between Aboriginal groups from across the greater landscape. The site was one of the great Aboriginal meeting places of eastern Australia.<sup>[1]</sup>

A story from Cunnamulla.

From 1885 when the railway was constructed to Bourke in New South Wales, farmers at Cunnamulla and other parts of south-western Queensland began to send their wool to markets via Bourke rather than the Charleville, then the terminus of the Western railway line in Queensland, as the New South Wales Government offered more competitive rail freight rates than the Queensland Government. Queensland Railway Commissioner James Thallon responded by negotiating with the Carrier's Union which carried goods to the Charleville railhead to make the cost of transporting the goods via Charleville more attractive. However, strikes by the carriers in support of the 1891 Australian shearers' strike meant that goods continued to be travel via New South Wales, further encouraged by new lower freight rates in New South Wales announced in June 1893. The Queensland Government responded the following month by introducing the Railway Border Tax Act which taxed wool and sheepskins crossing the border into New South Wales to make it too expensive to freight the wool via New South Wales. However, this could only be a temporary measure as the anticipated Federation of Australia would likely include free trade between the states of Australia removing the ability to tax goods at the border crossing. Therefore, on 3 December 1895, the Queensland Parliament approved the construction of the 121-mile (195 km) extension of the Western railway line from Charleville to Cunnamulla.

During the construction of the railway line, there was a dispute over the location of the railway station at Cunnamulla. The original proposal was

for the station to be to the north of the town to be above the flood level rather than within the town centre as was usual practice. However, the railway chief engineer Henry Charles Stanley visited Cunnamulla and decided it would be better to place the station in the centre of the town as it would be more convenient and better positioned for crossing the Warrego River when the railway line was further extended. However, the disadvantage of the town centre site was that it would encroach on the town's cricket ground. The townsfolk were divided on the issue and many sent petitions to the government to demand one location or the other. The Queensland Parliament eventually decided to proceed with the original location north of the town. The railway line to Cunnamulla was opened on 10 October 1898. However, the hotel on the corner of John and Louise Streets in the centre of the town had already been named the Railway Hotel in anticipation of a town-centre station and retained that name until the 1970s, when it was renamed Trappers Inn.

**Accommodation:**

Club Boutique Hotel or similar

**Day 3**

**Locations:** Longreach

**Overview:**

We take a walk around Cunnamulla with a local guide to learn about the unique town character and the story behind many of the historical buildings and businesses including hotels, saddlery, Tonkin House, churches and The Warrego Watchman.

Then we then journey further into North Queensland to Longreach via Charleville, Tambo Blackhall, Emmet and Isisford. We break for lunch en-route before rechaing our final destination today, Longreach. We expect to arrive in the late afternoon.

Our Queensland outback tour spends two nights in Longreach, the home of the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame, which showcases the history and cultural experiences of life in outback Australia , perhaps this is the home of the Australian adventure.

**Accommodation:**

Longreach Motor Inn or similar

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## Day 4

**Locations:** Longreach

**Overview:**

We have a day in Longreach. Visiting the Stockman's hall of fame, a escorted tour with a local guide of Longreach and a visit to the Qantas founder's museum.

Longreach was one of the founding centres for Qantas, technically QANTAS was founded in Winton.

With a mid afternoon finish, there is time to pause and relax or wander around longreach, stretching the legs. Our journeyNorth continues tomorrow.

**Accommodation:**

Longreach Motor Inn

## Day 5

**Locations:** Winton

**Overview:**

Arriving in Winton, just in the late mid morning we spend the afternoon exploring [Winton](#).

We visit the North Gregory Hotel, known as the 'Queen of the Outback', which has an impressive history. The first public performance of 'Waltzing Matilda' was here on April 6, 1895 (the story of which is told at the Waltzin' Matilda centre, the world's only museum dedicated to a song) and in the 1920s clandestine meetings helped launch a little airline known as QANTAS ...

During World War II, future American president Lyndon Johnson was forced to stay here in Winton, when forced to ditch his plane. The dining room – where you can enjoy a traditional outback dinner – features original etchings by acclaimed artist Daphne Mayo. Winton is also home to the red-browed pardalote, found across Queensland and the Northern Territory, and the elusive rusty grasswren, a small, long-tailed bird with reddish-brown upperparts (related to the Kalkadoon Grasswren, found in the Mt Isa region). We have a walking tour in the late afternoon to identify heritage buildings and more stories of the

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history of Winton before a group meal.

Winton is also the [dinosaur](#) capital of Australia .

**Accommodation:**

North Gregory Hotel or similar

**Day 6**

**Locations:** Winton

**Overview:**

Today is about Dinosaurs.

We visit the Australian Age of Dinosaurs Museum to learn about the Cretaceous sauropods that roamed the Winton area 95 million years ago. The dinosaurs were found on the property of a man named David Elliott – amazingly, in the form of an almost complete skeleton of a Sauropod! After our visit to the Dinosaurs Museum, we learn more about dinosaurs on a day trip to Lark Quarry, one of the most fascinating tourism centres in Queensland's outback . 95 million years ago, Lark Quarry was part of a great river plain, with sandy channels, swamps and lakes brimming with freshwater mussels, lungfish and crocodiles. Rainfall was over a metre per year, so the surrounding lowland forest was lush and green.

This is an amazing day as a step back in geological time and should also include the opportunity to see some of the volunteers who travel to Winton to assist on the dig, cleaning fossils in the lab and cataloguing.

**Accommodation:**

North Gregory Hotel or similar

**Day 7**

**Locations:** Hughenden

**Overview:**

From Winton, we continue the dinosaur trail to Hughenden, a classic Queensland outback Australia town reflective of the local culture this far North, which owes its existence to the railway line and surrounding cattle grazing land. Its primary appeal is its position on the edge of

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Australia 's ancient land sea, which existed between 95 and 120 million years ago, and left a rich supply of fossils in the area. The most important fossil discovery has been of a Muttaborrasaurus, today displayed prominently in the Flinders Discovery Centre. The skeleton was the first whole fossil to be found in Australia .

Again in the late afternoon we have a tour of the heritage buildings and the stories of Hughenden guided by the groups tour leader.

Hughenden was first reached by Europeans in 1861-2 when William Landsborough and Frederick Walker arrived looking for Burke and Wills, who had disappeared in the bush the year before. The Hughenden Showgrounds are home to the historic Coolabah Tree, which is linked to two relief missions who went on search for Burke and Wills. We will visit these locations as part of this tour of the town.

**Accommodation:**

The Royal Hotel or similar

**Day 8****Locations:** Hughenden**Overview:**

On our second day in Hughenden the group itinerary has a day tour to Porcupine National Park . This national park covers over 55 square kilometres of coloured sandstone desert , vine forests, and deep permanent waterholes, which contrast strikingly with the savanna plains surrounding Porcupine Creek and Porcupine Gorge or canyon. Exploring on foot, we visit the Gorge on a [moderate 90-minute walk](#) over flat terrain. Depending on the weather, we will probably start early today to avoid the heat of the day.

**Accommodation:**

The Royal Hotel or similar

## Day 9

**Locations:** Barcaldine

**Overview:**

Barcaldine The morning is spent travelling to Barcaldine. Hughenden was our most Northerly stop.

[Barcaldine](#)

is home to the Tree of Knowledge, which marks the birth of the labour movement in Australia . The tree grew outside the Railway Station for around 180 years until 2006, when sadly, it was poisoned by an unknown culprit. Today, the famous tree has been preserved and placed under an award-winning structure that gives the illusion of a canopy over the Tree. Head to the Tree at night for the best views, as the memorial is lit beautifully by special lighting.

In Barcaldine, we spend the afternoon on a excursion learning about the origins of the Australian Labour Party, and view the local culture and architectural curiosities, such as the masonic lodge – seemingly out of place in this small central west Queensland town. There are plenty of stories and cultural experiences to be shared here to hear as we explore the town.

**Accommodation:**

Landsborough Lodge Motel or similar

## Day 10

**Locations:** Carnarvon gorge National park

**Overview:**

Travelling back into the Australian outback, we head to Carnarvon National Park, where we spend two nights. Today is a travel day, we arrive in late afternoon, stopping as and when required by the group on the road.

Carnarvon Gorge is a rainforest oasis in the semi-arid heart of Central Queensland, and a major camping ground and centre of outback tourism. Towering white sandstone cliffs form a spectacular steep-sided gorge with narrow, vibrantly coloured and lush side-gorges. Boulder-strewn Carnarvon Creek winds through the gorge. The gorge is home

to a range of significant plant and animal species, many of them relics of cooler, wetter times.

**Accommodation:**

Takarakka Bush Resort or similar

**Day 11****Locations:** Carnarvon gorge National park**Overview:**

Today, we have a full day exploring the park. Not only fauna and flora but the Aboriginal rock art. A Local guide will share their knowledge and stories with the group.

Carnarvon Gorge lies within the spectacular and rugged ranges of Queensland's central highlands. Lined with vegetation and fed by the waters of numerous side gorges, Carnarvon Creek winds between towering sandstone cliffs. The gorge is a cool and moist oasis within the dry environment of central Queensland.

Recognised nationally for its outstanding natural and cultural values, Carnarvon Gorge protects unique and significant plants and animals—many of them relics of cooler, wetter times. Permanent springwater, cooler temperatures and low levels of direct sunlight provide the conditions that allow remnant rainforest to survive here in the dry central Queensland climate.

Carnarvon Creek always flows, even when it hasn't rained for months. Water falling as rain in the high country slowly percolates down through the porous sandstone, eventually meeting an impermeable (waterproof) band of rock known as shale. Unable to continue its journey downwards, the water moves sideways along the sandstone and escapes through breaks, seeping out at places such as the Moss Garden and at other springs within the gorge.

The springs and creeks of the gorge support a mosaic of habitats, home to an enormous diversity of life. Whether you choose to walk the main track or simply relax at the park visitor area, you will have many opportunities to encounter and discover the gorge's plants and animals. Mornings at the gorge are colourful as the sunlight meets the cliffs and a symphony of birdsong fills the air. Kangaroos and wallabies can be

found around the picnic area and at night echidnas can be seen strolling about. The call of yellow-bellied gliders, owls and the bush stone curlew are often heard after dark.

Steadily flowing water has carved this gorge out of ancient sandstone. The same water, still flowing from the rock, has drawn travelers to Carnarvon Gorge for many thousands of years. Aboriginal people have a long and continuing relationship with this dramatic landscape. While visitors to the park usually associate Aboriginal history with the park's rock art sites, the connection for Aboriginal people is with the entire landscape. The dreaming says that the rainbow serpent Mundagurra created Carnarvon Gorge as he travelled through the creek system, coming in and out of the water, and carving the sandstone as he travelled.

The fragile art on the gorge's sandstone walls reflects a rich culture. Ochre stencils of tools, weapons, ornaments and ceremonial objects provide an insight into the lives of the gorge's first people. The gorge is often described by today's Traditional Custodians as a place of learning – an area of great spirituality. This land still teaches, with many visitors to the park gaining a new understanding and appreciation of Aboriginal culture and history.

#### **European arrival**

Rugged ranges and rough terrain made this area difficult for early European explorers. Ludwig Leichhardt led the first European group into the region in 1844, passing to the east of the gorge. Two years later Thomas Mitchell and his party passed to the west. It is thought that Mitchell named the ranges after the Caernarfon Ranges of Wales.

European settlers followed soon after, with grazing runs established in the area in the 1860s. A mix of resourceful and colourful characters sought a life in this hard, remote area. High country to the south was named 'The Ranch', possibly by cattle duffers, while side-gorges were perfect for 'lying low'.

In 1932, a 26,300ha section of the gorge was declared as national park, after lobbying by the Royal Geographical Society of Queensland, which had organised expeditions into the area. The many sections of Carnarvon National Park now cover 298,000ha of the central highlands. Cathedral cave lies at the end of the Main Track and the turn-off is only metres from the boardwalked site. Ample seating is provided along the

multi-level boardwalk with interpretive signs pointing out key motifs. There are some motifs shared with the Art Gallery, such as the net patterns, but plenty unique to Cathedral Cave. See if you can find the stencilled rifle.

Based on archaeological evidence, Cathedral Cave was the main campsite for indigenous people using the Gorge whereas the Art Gallery appears to have been primarily ceremonial in nature. Cathedral Cave's massive overhang certainly provides more shelter in adverse weather than the comparatively shallow overhang at the Art Gallery.

When the Gorge was still being used as a cattle lease, Cathedral Cave was where cattle were coralled while the Gorge was being mustered. Unfortunately, the cattle damaged some of the rock art whilst penned in.

**Accommodation:**

Takarakka Bush Resort or similar

**Day 12**

**Locations:** Lightning Ridge

**Overview:**

We travel south from Carnarvon to [Lightning Ridge](#), New South Wales for an afternoon half day tour of this unique Opal town. This small group tour has an overnight stay here.

**Accommodation:**

Lightning Ridge outback Resort or similar

**Day 13**

**Locations:** Dubbo

**Overview:**

We drive down to Dubbo today. our journey will take 4 – 5 hours. When we arrive in Dubbo the remainder of the day is free for you to rest or enjoy a walk around the town, take time to reflect on the history and cultural experiences seen and taken during this group tour

**Accommodation:**

Quest Dubbo or similar

**Day 14**

**Locations:** Dubbo

**Overview:**

We spend the morning at the Dundullimal Homestead, a heritage-listed former pastoral station converted into a cultural facility and house museum. The afternoon is at your leisure to explore Dubbo, before a farewell group dinner in the evening.

**Accommodation:**

Quest Dubbo or similar

**Day 15**

**Locations:** Dubbo

**Overview:**

Our outback small group travel experience concludes after breakfast.

## Inclusions / Exclusions

### What's included in our Tour

- 14 nights accommodation.
- 14 breakfasts, 6 lunches, 8 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 Domestic airfares
- 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.