

Toolkit for Commercial Tour Operators & Events

Planning Tourism Activities
in Central West Queensland Parks



This project was proudly funded
by the Queensland Government



CONTENTS

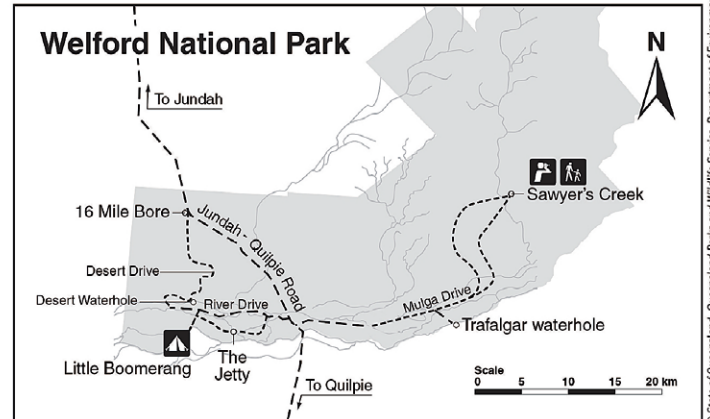
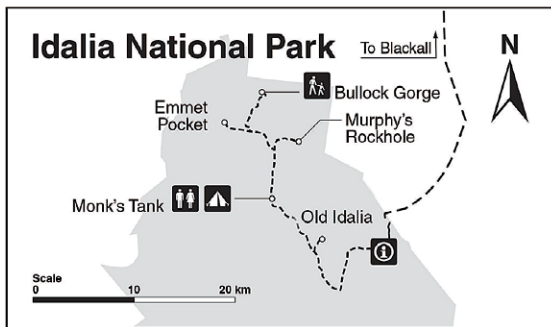
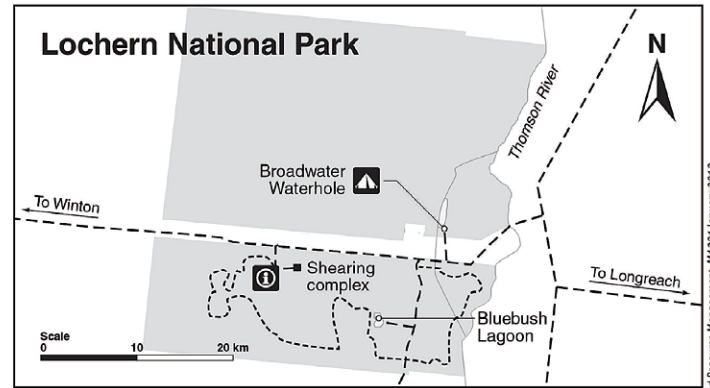
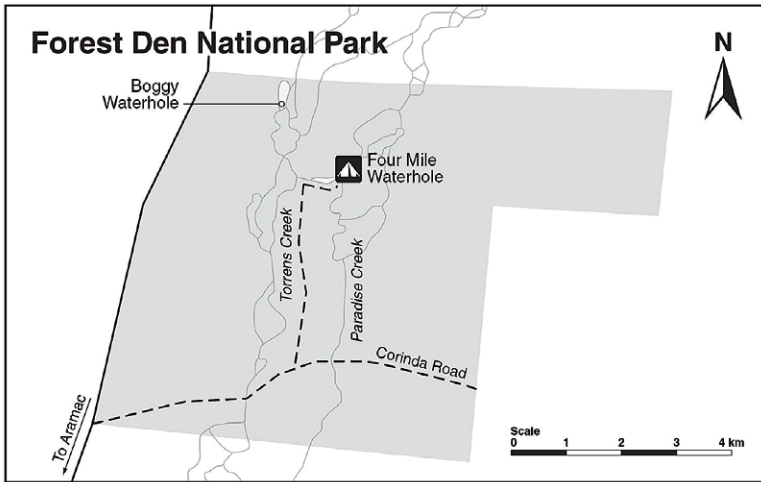
Using this toolkit.....	04
Overview of Central West Parks	05
Map of Central West Queensland Parks.....	06
Snapshot of Central West Park Experiences	07
National Park Permit Guidelines (including camping permits).....	08
Activity Guidelines for National Parks of the Diamantina River catchment	
Bladensburg National Park – 17km southwest of Winton	09
Lark Quarry Conservation Park – 110km southwest of Winton	11
Combo Waterhole Conservation Park – 132km northwest of Winton.....	13
Diamantina National Park – 183km southeast of Boulia.....	15
Munga-Thirri National Park* – 79 km west of Birdsville	17
(*previously Simpson Desert National Park)	
Activity Guidelines for National Parks of the Cooper Creek catchment	
Idalia National Park – 113 km southwest of Blackall	19
Welford National Park - 30km south-east of Jundah.....	21
Lochern National Park – 45km north of Stonehenge.....	23
Forest Den National Park – 100km north of Aramac.....	25
Outback Queensland Education Tour Subsidy Scheme.....	27
Helpful links for a safe and responsible visit	28

This Toolkit was commissioned by the Central Western Queensland Remote Area Planning and Development Board as part of the CWOQTA Tourism Development Action Plan. This toolkit is not a part of any Queensland Government or RAPAD policy.

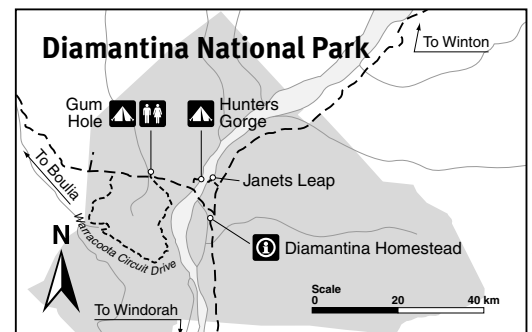
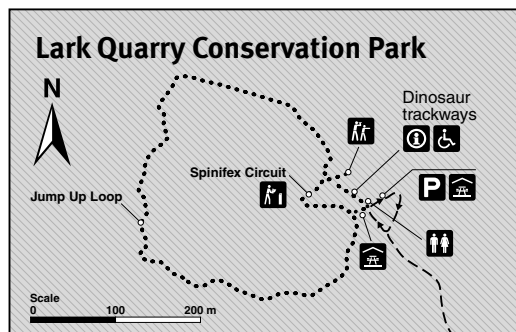
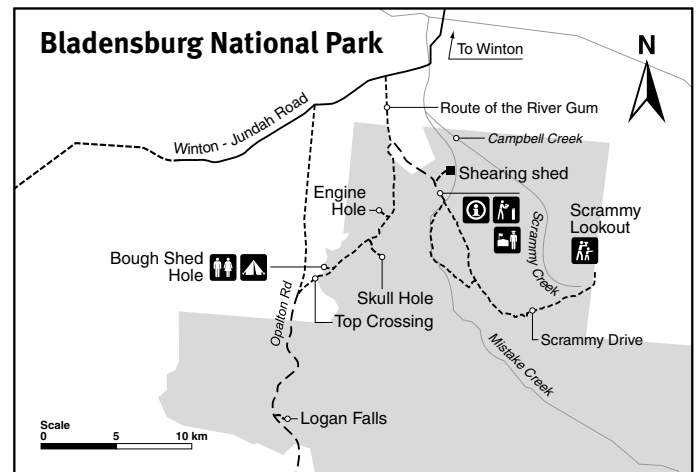
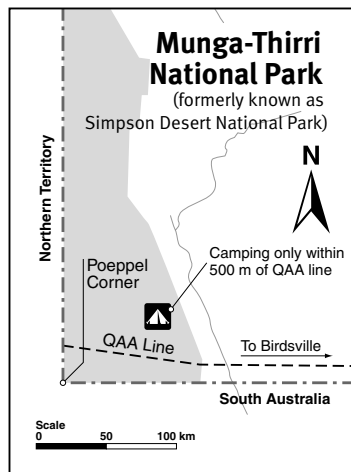
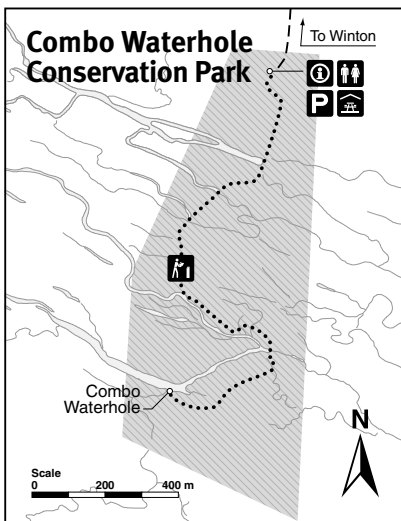
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Parks of the Cooper Creek Catchment



Parks of the Diamantina Catchment



USING THIS TOOLKIT

It has long been recognised that tour operators play an important role both in the promotion of our national parks and in encouraging visitors to value and enjoy them.

This Toolkit has been developed for use by commercial tour operators and events to encourage tourism activities in Central West Queensland parks.

These activities may include:

- School Group Excursions – day & overnight camping visits
- Commercial Tour Group itineraries – day & overnight camping visits
- Commercial Events – onsite events e.g. concerts; performances

This toolkit is designed to help make itinerary planning easier for commercial tour operators wishing to include national park day visits and/or overnight camping in their Outback Queensland tour. It will also provide useful information and contacts for Commercial event planners looking to hold an event in a national park.

Specifically this Central West Queensland Park Toolkit includes:

- Activity guides
- Access guidelines and permit information for day and overnight tours (including camping permits)
- Park facility information
- Helpful links to relevant tourism and park management authorities



ABOUT CENTRAL WEST OUTBACK QUEENSLAND PARKS

There are 13 national and conservation parks in Central West Outback Queensland. Of these, 12 are open to visitors and nine have vehicle access to the park. The guidelines contained in this toolkit relate to the nine parks which currently have vehicle access.

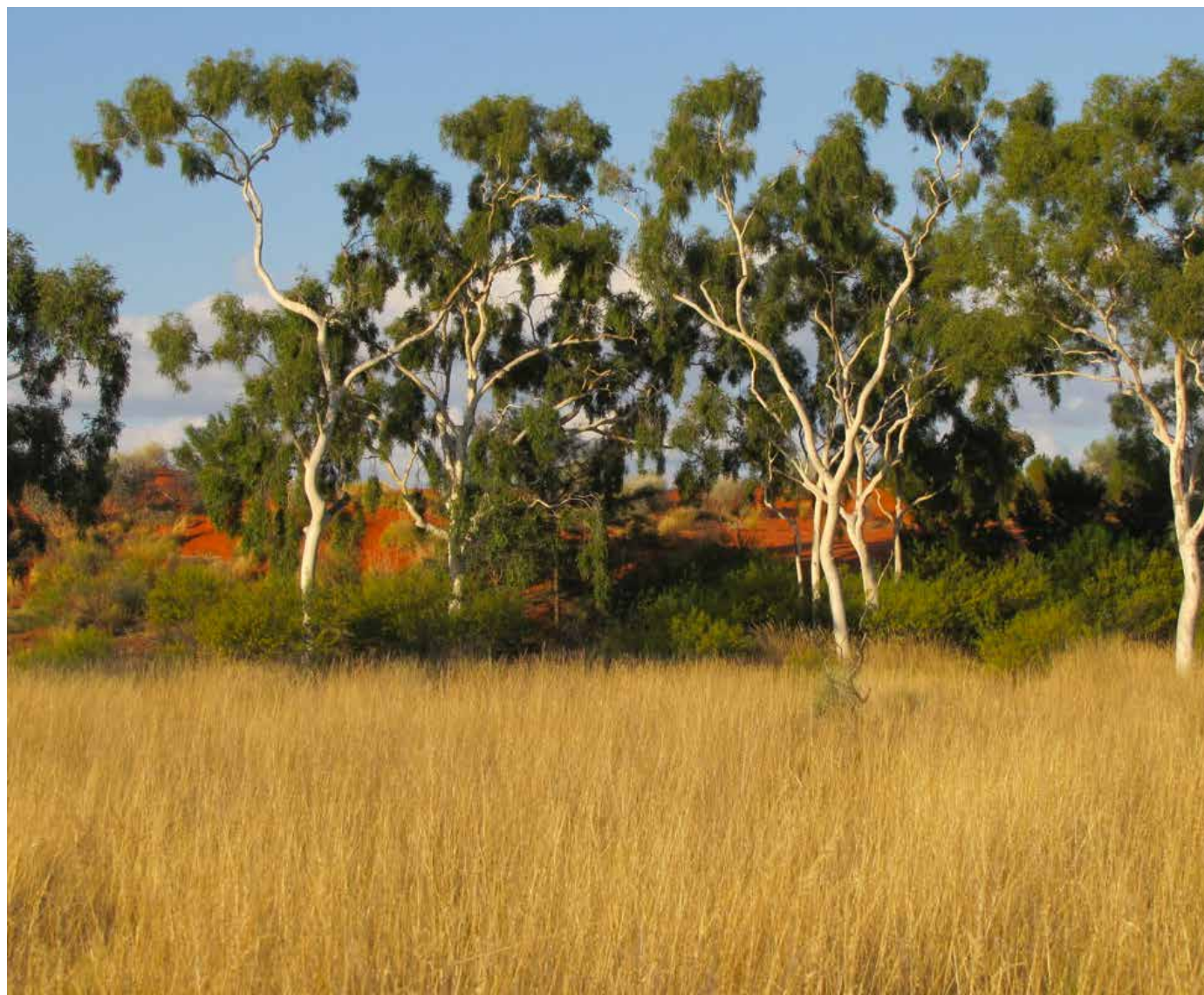
These parks fall within two extensive river catchments – the Cooper Creek and Diamantina River catchments – the most variable large watercourses in the world. They feed the Lake Eyre Basin, one of the world's last largely unregulated wild river systems.

Parks of the Diamantina River catchment – with vehicle access

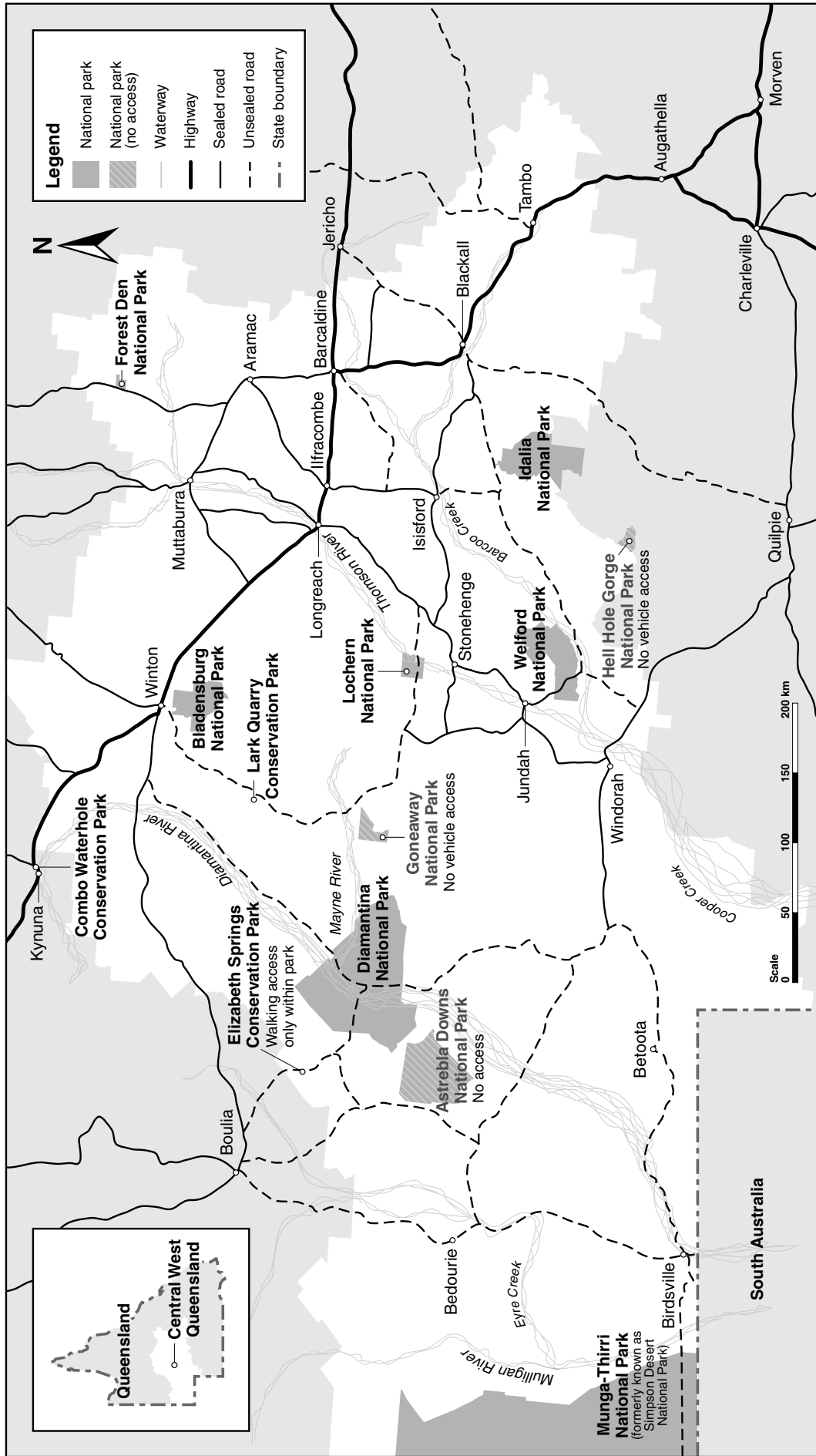
- Bladensburg National Park – 17km southwest of Winton
- Lark Quarry Conservation Park – 110km southwest of Winton
- Combo Waterhole Conservation Park – 132km northwest of Winton
- Diamantina National Park – 183km southeast of Boulia
- Munga-Thirri (Simpson Desert) National Park – 79km west of Birdsville

Parks of the Cooper Creek catchment – with vehicle access

- Idalia National Park – 113km southwest of Blackall
- Welford National Park – 30km south-east of Jundah
- Lochern National Park – 45km north of Stonehenge
- Forest Den National Park – 100km north of Aramac



Parks of Central West Queensland



SNAPSHOT OF CENTRAL WEST QUEENSLAND PARK EXPERIENCES & SITES

Birdwatching is best at:

- Bladensburg
- Diamantina
- Forest Den
- Idalia
- Lochern
- Welford

Watch kangaroos & wallabies at:

- Idalia
- Lochern
- Welford

Go bushwalking through:

- Bladensburg
- Combo Waterhole
- Forest Den
- Idalia
- Lark Quarry
- Lochern
- Welford

Drive amongst ancient red dunes at:

- Munga-Thirri (formerly Simpson Desert National Park)

Canoe along rivers and creeks at:

- Diamantina
- Lochern
- Welford

Ride mountain bikes through:

- Idalia
- Lochern
- Welford

Learn our pastoral heritage at:

- Bladensburg
- Diamantina
- Lochern
- Welford
- Combo

Experience Indigenous heritage at:

- Diamantina (visitor information about Indigenous heritage is currently being developed for other parks)

Learn about fossils at:

- Bladensburg
- Lark Quarry

Take a self-guided scenic drive through:

- Bladensburg
- Diamantina
- Idalia
- Lochern
- Welford

Camping is permitted at:

- Bladensburg
- Diamantina
- Forest Den
- Idalia
- Lochern
- Welford
- Munga-Thirri (formerly Simpson Desert NP)

NATIONAL PARK PERMIT GUIDELINES (INCLUDING CAMPING PERMITS)

For school groups:

If the commercial operator is primarily providing a transport service it would not require a Commercial Activity Permit. The operator, on behalf of the School would simply need to submit a notification of the activity on-line: <http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/licences-permits/recreation/group-activity-notification.php>

For general tour groups and commercial events:

A commercial activity permit OR a Commercial Activity Agreement is required and can be applied for here: <http://www.business.qld.gov.au/industry/tourism/parks-recreation-forests>

Note that applications generally take from a few weeks to a maximum of 40 business days; and note also that all applications are individually assessed.

Camping Permits:

Before camping in a park, forest or reserve, you must obtain a camping permit and pay your camping fees. Fees for camping permits are:

- \$5.60 per person per night or \$22.40 per family group per night.
- \$3.10 per person per night for students and accompanying adults on approved excursions.

More information:
<http://parks.nprsr.qld.gov.au/permits>

Camping Permits for special groups

Organised groups are able to request a special account—group account, school account or commercial operator account—for pre-booking camping online.

- Group accounts—holders of group accounts have access to the same campsites as standard customers, but can override standard group size limits.
- Schools accounts—holders of school accounts have access to special use areas that are not available to other account types. Discounts also apply for school groups.
- Commercial operator accounts—holders of commercial operator accounts have access to special use areas that are not available to other account types and can override standard group size restrictions.



BLADENSBURG NATIONAL PARK – 17KM SOUTHWEST OF WINTON

About the Park

Impressive flat-topped plateaus and residual sandstone ranges provide a scenic backdrop to vast grassland plains and river flats, river red gums and rocky scarp. Spot some endangered wildlife including the Julia Creek dunnart and enjoy pastoralist history. The Koa People consider Bladensburg to be part of their traditional country, and the park is also important to the Maiawali and Karuwali People. Skull Hole is believed to be the site of a massacre of Aboriginal people in the late 1800s. Pastoralists established a large station at Bladensburg – the homestead has been restored and is used as an information centre and ranger office. There are other sites within this 84,900 ha park, that offer reminders of the park's early pastoral history. Bladensburg National Park provides regionally significant opportunities for nature and heritage-based recreation and tourism, including day-use recreation, camping, cycling and nature studies.

Access & facilities

Drive south from Winton towards Jundah. After about 8 km turn left along the Route of the River Gum. From the turn-off it is 5 km to a Junction. Turn left to Bladensburg homestead (5km) or right along the Route of the River Gum to Bough Shed Hole camping area (12 km).

There is a sealed bitumen road near the western boundary. Roads within the park are formed dirt roads more suited to four-wheel-drive vehicles. Conventional vehicles can access Bladensburg only during dry weather, and a high clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle is recommended at all times. Bladensburg National Park is open all year however wet weather may cause temporary closures.

Park facilities: Pit toilet, Ranger office, Interpretative trail

For specific information on access for large vehicles please contact the Ranger-in-charge Alistair Hartley. Ph: (07) 46571192 or call the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.



BLADENSBURG NATIONAL PARK – 17KM SOUTHWEST OF WINTON

Park activities and attractions

- Bladensburg homestead walk (allow 30-45 mins) Grade: easy
- Historical pastoral operations are represented by the homestead complex; outrider stations, shearing shed, Grave of baby Delia Dalrymple, remnants of old Bladensburg racetrack, Manhole bore (windmill)
- Scenic drive to Scrammy Gorge – 40km return (allow 2-4 hrs): suitable for high clearance four-wheel-drive vehicle
- Significant fossil deposits only partially explored
- Endangered Julia Creek dunnarts sleep by day in the cracks of the blacksoil plains
- Interpretation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal history is available at the Ranger base
- Ranger talks can be arranged for school excursion and general tour groups, subject to availability and advance booking notice.

Wildlife

The park is home to a diversity of birds, including emus, Australian bustards, Hall's babblers, spotted bowerbirds and singing bushlarks. You may still see painted firetails and rufous-crowned emu-wrens among the spinifex and rufous-throated honeyeaters along creek lines. Look for red kangaroos on the open Mitchell grasslands, eastern grey kangaroos in the lower creeks and wallaroos around mesa areas.

Camping

Camp beside Surprise Creek at the permanent Bough Shed waterhole. The camping area is suitable for tents and camper trailers and has a pit toilet. There is a swimming hole at the campground.

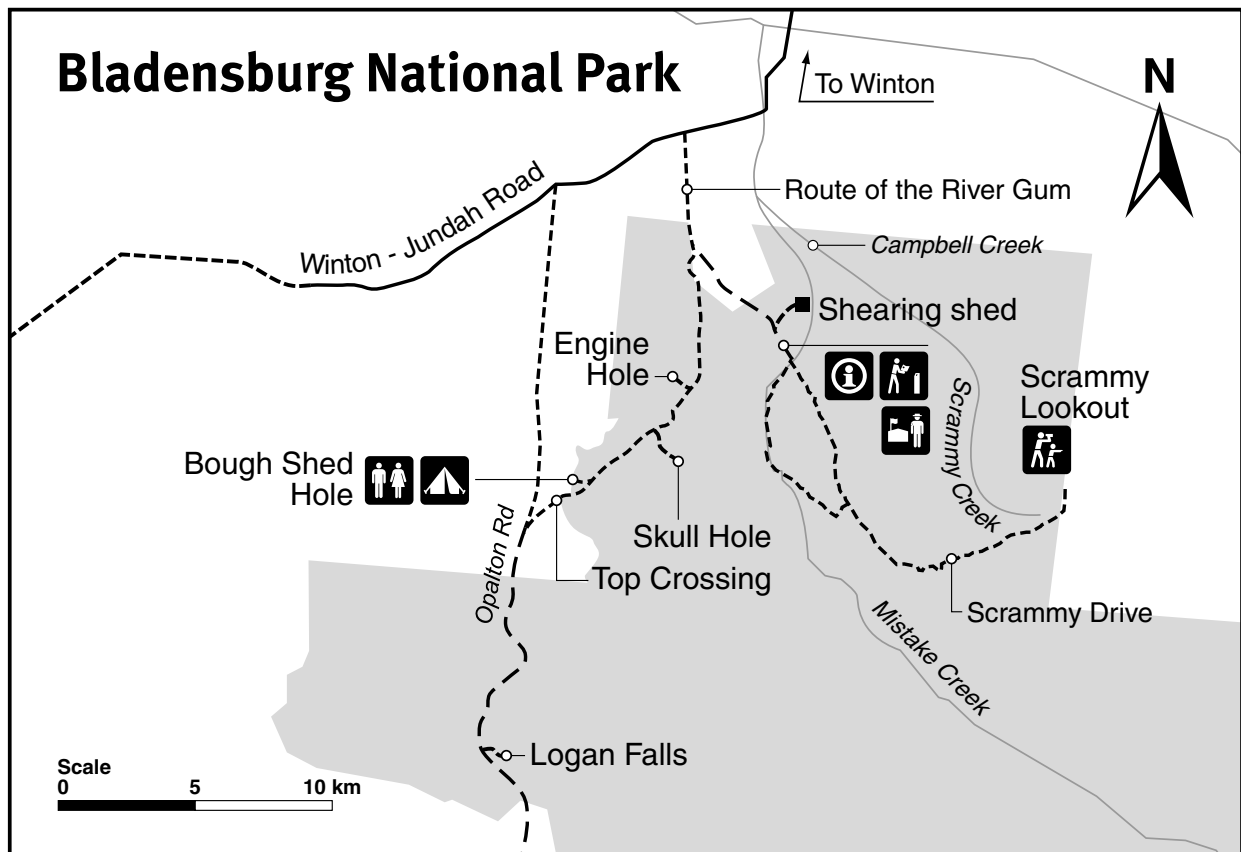
Neaby accommodation – Winton

Waltzing Matilda Centre

Ph: 1300 665 115

E: waltzing@matildacentre.com.au

www.matildacentre.com.au



LARK QUARRY CONSERVATION PARK – 110 KM SOUTH-WEST OF WINTON

About the Park

Stampede! Panicked dinosaurs left more than 4000 muddy footprints on the shores of a lake 95 million years ago when a larger dinosaur tromped among them in search of a meal. Rollercoaster across ancient mesas of jump-up country to the world's only known dinosaur stampede site. The trackways are protected inside a solar-powered shelter built using ecologically sustainable methods. Entry to the park and its two walking tracks is free, but access to Lark Quarry's dinosaur trackways is by guided tour only and a fee applies. (see details below in Park Activities). Formed over millions of years, the ancient rocks known as the Winton Formation have been eroded into a striking landscape of jump-up country with flat-topped hills (mesas), gullies, and steep, broken escarpments.

Access & facilities

The park is 110 km south west of Winton. It is possible to reach the park in a conventional vehicle, however a four-wheel-drive vehicle is recommended. Access is suitable for large 4WD coaches. Stop in Winton for directions and the latest road conditions. Allow two hours to travel the unsealed road to the 400 ha park. At Lark Quarry there are no reliable UHF channels for contacting others.

Entry to the park, its walking tracks and the orientation centre is free, but access to Lark Quarry's dinosaur trackways is by guided tour only and a fee applies. Open all year however wet weather may cause temporary closures. Visiting is recommended from April to September.

Park facilities: Toilets, Information, Parking, Interpretive trail, Disabled access, Sheltered picnic area.

For specific information on access for large vehicles please contact the Ranger-in-charge Alistair Hartley. Ph: (07) 46571192 or call the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.



LARK QUARRY CONSERVATION PARK – 110 KM SOUTH-WEST OF WINTON

Park Activities & Attractions

- Spinifex Circuit bush walk – 500m (allow 30 mins). Grade: easy-moderate
- Jump Up Loop bush walk – 3.5km (allow 90 mins) Grade: difficult
- Dinosaur Trackways guided tour at 10.00am, 12.00pm and 2.00pm daily.
No tours on Christmas Day or Boxing Day. The Trackways building is wheelchair accessible.
Bookings through the Waltzing Matilda Centre, Winton on 1300 665 115

Wildlife

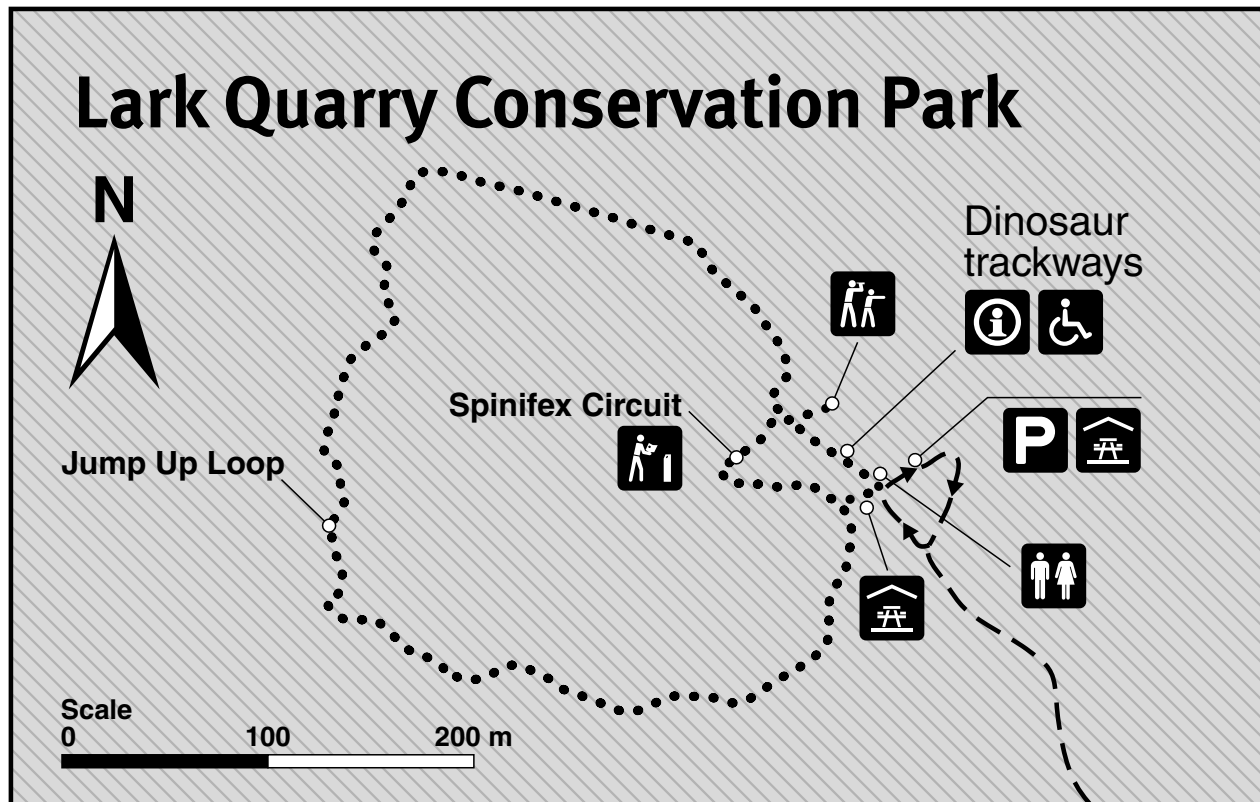
Keep an eye out, you may see a number of animals in the park during the day. Commonly seen birds include spinifex pigeons, painted finches, crimson chats, singing honeyeaters, spinifexbirds and little woodswallows. You may also see ring-tailed dragons sunning themselves on nearby rocks. Wallaroos are also quite common.

Camping

Camping is not permitted at Lark Quarry Conservation Park.

Nearby accommodation

Waltzing Matilda Centre
Ph: 1300 665 115
E: waltzing@matildacentre.com.au
www.matildacentre.com.au



COMBO WATERHOLE CONSERVATION PARK – 132 KM NORTH-WEST OF WINTON

About the Park

Combo Waterhole Conservation Park gets its name from the most famous of the many waterholes found within this 49 ha park. Did the jolly swagman camp by Combo Waterhole? We will probably never know, but the waterholes of this 49 ha park offer a refuge for wildlife in dry times, just as they provided shady picnic spots in 1895 for stagecoach passengers and the residents of neighbouring Dagworth Station. The Koa Aboriginal people were the first to follow the Diamantina River—a web of life that traverses the land in braided channels—pioneering paths of trade and travel. Explorers followed, then settlers brought sheep and cattle and established a stock route. Cobb and Co. teams trotted close behind. Today visitors can explore the historic stone-pitched overshots and the most readily accessible Mitchell grass downs in the area.

Access & facilities

Combo Waterhole Conservation Park is 132 km north-west of Winton. Turn south off the Landsborough Highway 13 km south of Kynuna and follow the short drive to the park. Vehicles are not permitted beyond the car park. You can access the park with a conventional vehicle, however four-wheel drive is recommended. Open all year however wet weather may cause temporary closures. Visiting is recommended from April to September.

Park facilities: Toilet, Information, Parking, Interpretive trail, Sheltered picnic tables

For specific information on access for large vehicles and/or more information on park facilities, please contact the Ranger-in-charge Alistair Hartley ph: (07) 4657 1192 or call the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.



COMBO WATERHOLE CONSERVATION PARK – 132 KM NORTH-WEST OF WINTON

Park Activities & Attractions

- Combo Waterhole bush walk –2.6 km return (allow 1.5 hours) Grade: Easy
- Picnic in the shade of the coolibah tree once you reach the historic waterhole at the end of the short walk.

Wildlife

A wildlife refuge, birdwatching is particularly good at this park. You may see the long legged Australian pranticoles. Listen for the tiny weebill's call—surprisingly far-carrying for such a small bird. Rainbow bee-eaters, sacred kingfishers and spotted harriers have all been seen in this park. Many more bird species can be seen and heard along the waterway.

Camping

Camping is not permitted at Combo Waterhole Conservation Park.

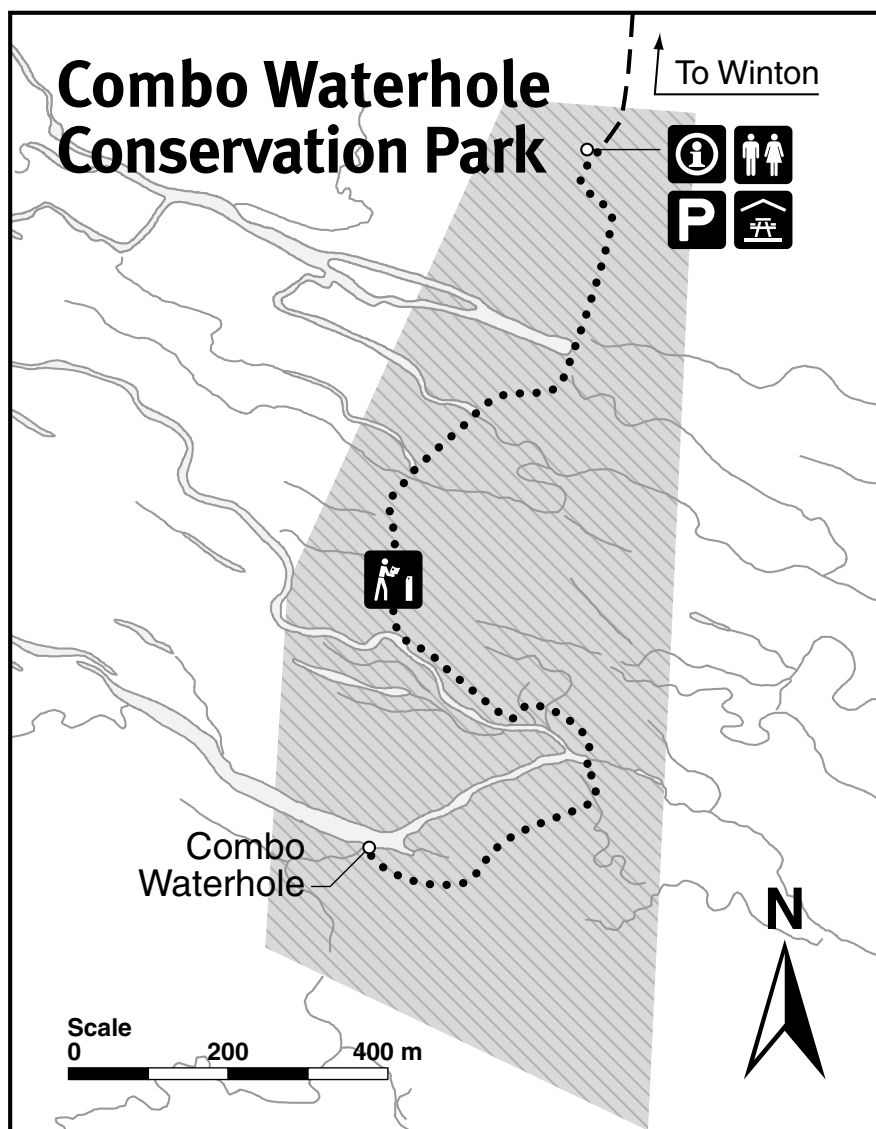
Nearby accommodation

Waltzing Matilda Centre

Ph: 1300 665 115

E: waltzing@matildacentre.com.au

www.matildacentre.com.au



DIAMANTINA NATIONAL PARK – 183KM SOUTHEAST OF BOULIA

About the Park

This 507,000 hectare park is home to many rare and threatened species including bilbies, kowaris and two ground dwelling birds- the plains wanderer and the elusive night parrot. Lake Constance and Hunters Gorge are important wetlands and support breeding populations of many resident and migratory birds. Diamantina National Park was formerly a pastoral holding and became a national park in 1992. It sweeps across highly weathered sandstone ranges in the east, down to the floodplains of the Diamantina River and its tributaries, then across Mitchell grass plains to dune-fields reminiscent of deserts further west. In the past, Maiawali and Karuwali Aboriginal people moved through every part of this landscape. Their strong spiritual connections remain today. Early explorers revealed the potential for a thriving cattle industry on the extensive grass plains and naturally deep waterholes and Diamantina Lakes Station was established in 1875.

Access & facilities

Diamantina National Park can be reached by heading south from Winton or Boulia, north from Windorah or east from Bedourie. A four-wheel-drive vehicle with high clearance is necessary as many outback roads are unsealed and wheel ruts can be deep. Take extra fuel. Nearest fuel and supplies are at Boulia (183km), Winton (306 km) or Windorah (350 km). Open all year however wet weather may cause temporary closures. Visiting is recommended from April to September.

Park facilities: Toilet, Information; Parking; Sheltered picnic tables

For specific information on access and road conditions for large and/or specific park facilities vehicles please contact the Ranger-in-charge Chris Mitchell ph: (07) 4657 3024 or call the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.



DIAMANTINA NATIONAL PARK – 183KM SOUTHEAST OF BOULIA

Park Activities & Attractions

- Warracoota Ruins walk – 400m return (allow 45mins) Grade: easy
- Warracoota Circuit Drive—approximately 90km (allow 4-5hrs)
- Janets Leap lookout drive –approximately 8km return (allow 1hr)
- Canoe and paddle in the peaceful permanent waterholes and seasonal lakes
- Warracoota ruins
- Diamantina Lakes Homestead complex and graveyard, numerous cattle yards and an old airstrip
- Areas of significance for Aboriginal cultural heritage accessed by visitors include Hunters Gorge, Lake Constance and Warracoota Waterhole

Wildlife

Diamantina’s wildlife is highly diverse for arid Queensland, and animals found here include a number of rare and threatened species, including bilbies, kowaris, plains-wanderers, peregrine falcons, and two rare species of skink.

The park’s large permanent waterholes attract many animals and are particularly good for birdwatching at dawn and dusk. While you are travelling around the park, keep an eye out for Hall’s babbler, black falcons and oriental plovers.

Camping

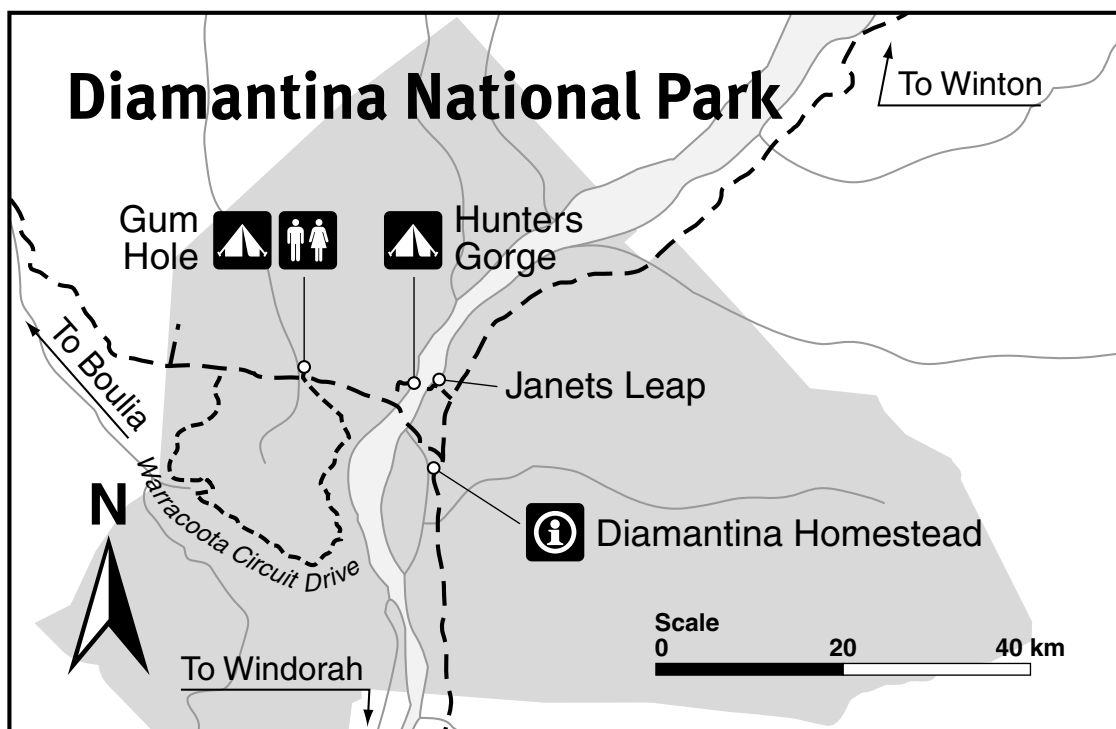
Camping is permitted at Hunters Gorge and Gum Hole camping areas. A pit toilet and e-permit camping display are the only facilities provided.

Nearby accommodation

Contact the Min Min Encounter Tourist Centre in Boulia for details

Ph: (07) 4746 3386

www.boulia.qld.gov.au/min-min-encounter-tourist-centre



MUNGA-THIRRI NATIONAL PARK (PREVIOUSLY SIMPSON DESERT NP) – 79 KM WEST OF BIRDSVILLE

About the Park

At one million hectares, Munga-Thirri National Park is Queensland's largest protected area. At Poeppel Corner it meets South Australia's Simpson Desert Conservation Park and the Northern Territory's Simpson Desert Regional Reserve. The entire Simpson Desert covers more than 17 million hectares of Central Australia. Across the Simpson, parallel dunes rising to 90 m run south-east to north-west, the dominant wind direction when they formed during the Pleistocene epoch about 80,000 years ago. Spaced about 1 km apart, dunes can extend 200 km. Bare windswept crests stand atop slopes secured by spinifex and cane grass. Flat plains between dunes can be wind-polished gibber pebbles or mineral encrusted claypans, but many surprisingly support open shrub lands of acacias, hakeas and grevilleas.

Access & facilities

Warning! Only self-sufficient visitors experienced in desert and remote area travel should explore Munga-Thirri and the Simpson Desert.

A four-wheel-drive is required to reach and drive through Munga-Thirri National Park. From Birdsville, take the old Birdsville track and turn west 1 km south of the police station. The first 35 km to the Big Red dune is a graded shire road and passes through private property. Although there are no roads across the desert, there are tracks such as the QAA Line and Rig Road. These tracks are not suitable for large vehicles. Check with local authorities or the Desert Parks Pass Bulletin on 1800 816 078 (free call) for current road conditions.

For specific information on access for large vehicles and road conditions please contact the Ranger-in-charge Don Rowlands ph: (07) 4656 3272 or call the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.



MUNGA-THIRRI NATIONAL PARK (PREVIOUSLY SIMPSON DESERT NP) – 79 KM WEST OF BIRDSVILLE

Park Activities & Attractions

- Enjoy the rich colours of this big sky country with its red sand dunes and ironstone pebbles, grey-green spinifex grass and clear blue skies.
- Big Red: Desert Edge Tours operate regular 4WD tours to the top of Big Red on the edge of the desert, and work closely with visiting tour operators. Ph: 0419364381 website: www.birdsvilledesertedgetours.com

Wildlife

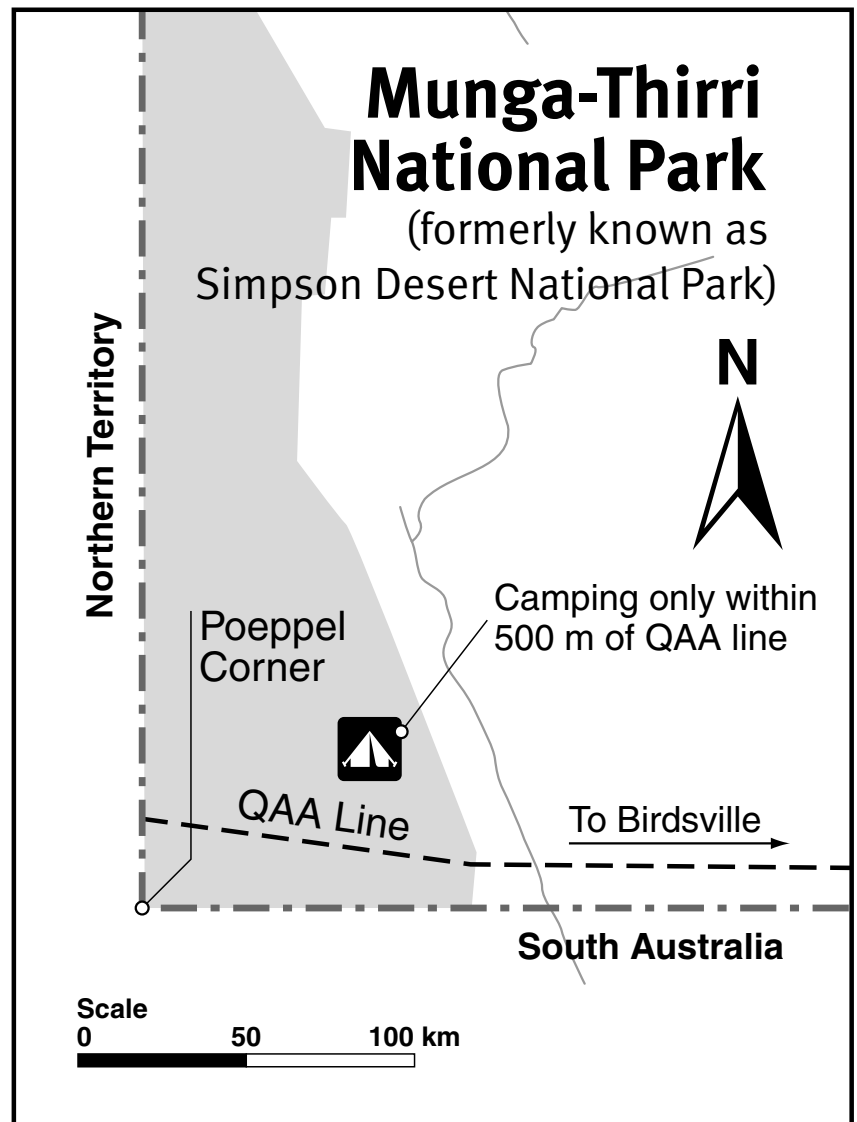
Simpson Desert is home to hardy mammals, many reptiles and over 180 bird species. Sandhill cane grass shelters small birds. Lizards hide from predators in spiky, rounded clumps of lobed spinifex. Mulgaras, small carnivorous marsupials, burrow into dunes to escape the heat. Look for the distinctive crest of short black hairs on the tail of this vulnerable species. Georgina gidgee, a rounded wattle tree, occurs extensively in dune swales and emits a pungent odour after rain.

Camping

Camping is permitted within 500 m of the QAA line.

Nearby Accommodation

Contact Wirrarri Visitor Information Centre
Ph: 1300 794 257/ 07 4656 3300
E: info@diamantina.qld.gov.au
www.diamantina.qld.gov.au



IDALIA NATIONAL PARK - 113KM SOUTH-WEST OF BLACKALL

About the park

This 144,000 hectare park protects extensive mulga woodlands, the headwaters of the Bulloo River and threatened wildlife, including a translocated population of bridled nailtail wallabies. Explore the gorges and rock formations of Idalia's Gowan Range tablelands. As you emerge from the dense mulga, catch surprise views of rugged escarpments, home to yellow-footed rock-wallabies. You may also see other macropods grazing along the creek flats.

Visit innovative stake stockyards built from the 1920s to 1950s to hold up to 300 cattle during muster. Wander among the rusty iron and splintered bush timber relics, imagining the stories behind them.

Access & facilities

Idalia National Park is 113km south-west of Blackall in the Gowan Ranges. Access to Idalia is suitable for four-wheel-drive only. Take the Isisford Road from Blackall for 42km then turn left into the Yaraka Road. At the Benlidi siding, turn left and follow the Idalia-Benlidi Road for about 34km to the park boundary. Idalia National Park is open all year, however wet weather may cause temporary closures.

Park facilities: Pit toilet, Information, Walking track

For specific information on access for large vehicles and road conditions please contact the Ranger-in-charge Gary Jorgensen (07) 4657 5033 or call the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.



IDALIA NATIONAL PARK - 113KM SOUTH-WEST OF BLACKALL

Park Activities & Attractions

- Old Idalia walk (Allow 30–45mins to explore) Grade: Easy
- Wave rock walk—1.2km return (Allow 1–2hrs) Grade: Easy
- Rainbow Gorge walk—200m return (Allow 30–45mins to explore) Grade: Easy
- Bullock Gorge walk—2.7km return (Allow 1–2hrs) Grade: Easy
- Emmet Pocket walk—4.4km return (Allow 2–3hrs) Grade: Difficult
- Murphys Rockhole drive —approximately 10km (return)
- Emmet Pocket lookout drive —approximately 24km (return)

Wildlife

Idalia is home to seven species of macropods. Wallaroos, red and grey kangaroos, swamp wallabies, black-striped wallabies, yellow-footed rock-wallabies and endangered bridled nailtail wallabies all abound at Idalia.

A number of bird species observed at Idalia are at the known limits of their distribution. These include plum-headed finches, eastern yellow robins and speckled warblers. Colourful mallee ringnecks and mulga parrots, crested bellbirds, grey-crowned and Hall's babblers and common bronzewing pigeons are often seen.

Camping

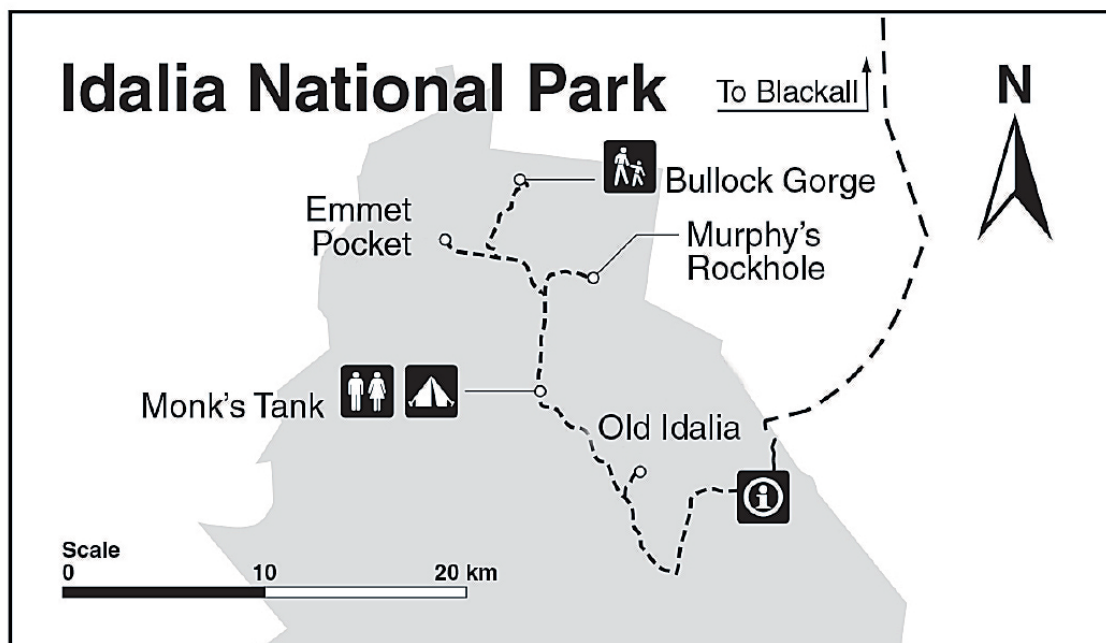
Camping is permitted at Monks Tank camping area. A pit toilet is the only facility provided.

Accommodation

Contact the Blackall-Tambo Visitor Information Centre for details

Ph: 07 4657 4637

www.btrc.qld.gov.au



WELFORD NATIONAL PARK -

30KM SOUTH-EAST OF JUNDAH, WHICH IS 210KM SOUTH OF LONGREACH

About the park

Welford is a land of contrasts—wide coolibah-lined waters and grey alluvial channels of the Barcoo River slice a brown and green swathe through Mitchell grass plains and arid mulga woodlands. Golden-green spinifex and white-barked ghost gums grow atop a vivid backdrop of red sand dunes.

Majestic river red gums line the Barcoo River, the southern boundary of the 124,000ha park. Varied habitats create vital refuges for wildlife, including rare yellow-footed rock-wallabies and mulga parrots.

Remnants of Aboriginal heritage and use, including water wells and stone arrangements, are found throughout the park. You can see a rare (rammed earth) homestead built on this former grazing property in 1882. Listed by the National Trust, the homestead is one of only two pisé constructions still occupied in Queensland. The homestead is now staff quarters and is not open to the public.

Access & facilities

Welford National Park's northern boundary is 30km south-east of Jundah and the park has a northern and southern entrance. Lying on the Barcoo River, this 124,000ha park can be accessed from either Jundah, Windorah, Blackall or Quilpie. Access roads are unsealed and a four-wheel-drive vehicle is recommended. Welford National Park is open all year, however wet weather may cause temporary closures, especially during the wet season from December to March.

Park facilities: Pit toilet, Information, Walking track

For specific information on access for large vehicles and road conditions please contact the Ranger-in-charge Shane Hume (07) 4658 5994 or call the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.



WELFORD NATIONAL PARK -

30KM SOUTH-EAST OF JUNDAH, WHICH IS 210KM SOUTH OF LONGREACH

Park activities & attractions

- Sawyers lookout walk—1.2km return (allow 30 minutes) Grade: Moderate.
- Desert Drive—22km one way (allow at least 3 hours) 4WD access only
- River Drive—12.3km one way (allow at least 1.5 hours) 4WD access only
- Mulga Drive—54.5km return (allow at least 4 hours) 4WD access only
- Fishing in the Barcoo River is permitted, however size and bag limits apply.
- Little Boomerang has a large expanse of permanent water which is a popular location for boating, canoeing and kayaking.
- As you're driving through the park take note of the historic cattle and sheep yards, a remnant of Welford's cattle station past.

Wildlife

Numerous large, permanent waterholes on the Barcoo River's floodplains are important refuges for birds, particularly during severe droughts. Look for pelicans, brolgas, black swans, cormorants, whistling kites and whiskered terns. A delightful sight in late winter is a male emu walking across the open grasslands followed by his tiny striped chicks. The female emu's parental role ends when she lays the eggs. Major Mitchell's cockatoos, mallee ringnecks, red-winged parrots and mulga parrots provide a flash of colour in the Mulga Lands.

Red and grey kangaroos and wallaroos are common at Welford. Watch out for them when driving at night. Common brushtail possums are rarely seen in Western Queensland, but nest at Welford during the day in hollows of river red gums and coolibahs lining the waterholes. Look for them near your campsite at night.

Camping

Bush camping is permitted at Little Boomerang Waterhole, on the Barcoo River. A toilet is provided.

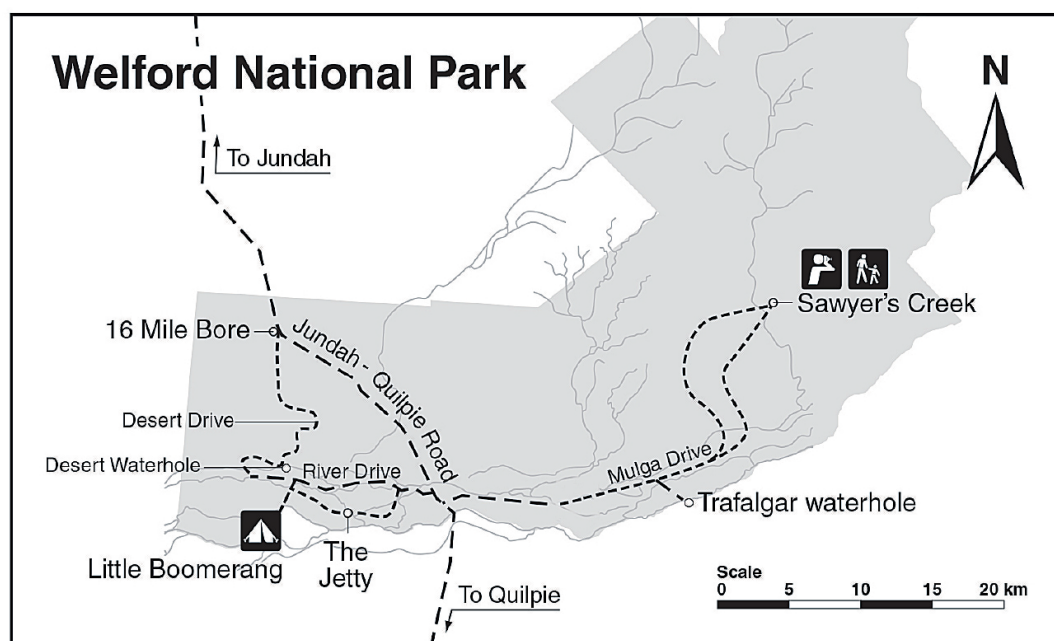
Nearby accommodation

Contact Longreach Toursim

Ph: (07) 4658 4150

email: visitinf@longreach.qld.gov.au

www.longreachtourism.com.au or <http://barcoo.qld.gov.au>



LOCHERN NATIONAL PARK - ABOUT 150KM SOUTH-WEST OF LONGREACH

About the park

Lochern has 20km of Thomson River frontage. The park protects 24,300ha of important habitat, with many lagoons and waterholes providing refuge for birds and other wildlife.

The people of Lochern also adapted to the cycles of wet and dry. Aboriginal people enjoyed the bounties on offer from seasonal transformations of the land. Pastoralists built dams with long wings and stone-pitched ends to catch extra rainwater, and set the hen-house and motor room high and dry.

Access & facilities

Lochern National Park is 45km north of Stonehenge. Turn off the Longreach–Jundah Road at the Lochern signpost 100km south of Longreach. Follow this unsealed road for about 40km to the park boundary at Thomson River.

If travelling from Winton via Lark Quarry, allow 4–5 hours for the 330km trip. Expect poor, rough road conditions and watch for bulldust and road trains.

Lochern National Park is open all year, however wet weather may cause temporary closures.

For specific information on access for large vehicles and road conditions please contact the Ranger-in-charge Shane Hume ph: (07) 4658 5994 or call the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.

Park Activities

- The park has no walking tracks but you can wander around the river and waterholes.
- Lochern habitat drive—approximately 40km return (allow 2–4 hours)
- Boating: Canoeing and kayaking in Broadwater Waterhole is a popular activity
- Fishing in the waterholes is permitted, however size and bag limits apply.
- You can ride your bicycle along the park's habitat drive.



LOCHERN NATIONAL PARK - ABOUT 150KM SOUTH-WEST OF LONGREACH

Wildlife

Look for hooded robins and Major Mitchell's cockatoos, Hall's babblers and splendid fairy-wrens. Ringnecked, red-winged, mulga and Bourke's parrots are also common. Listen carefully for the crested bellbird's clear call. Emus abound at Lochern in good seasons. Australian bustards are most likely to be seen in the Mitchell grass plains. Stately brolgas also frequent the plains and spotted harriers can be seen gliding low, hunting for food. Black kites fly overhead and Whistling kites nest and call beside Broadwater Waterhole. See Red-tailed black-cockatoos flying along the river channels and Budgerigars nesting in the coolibahs.

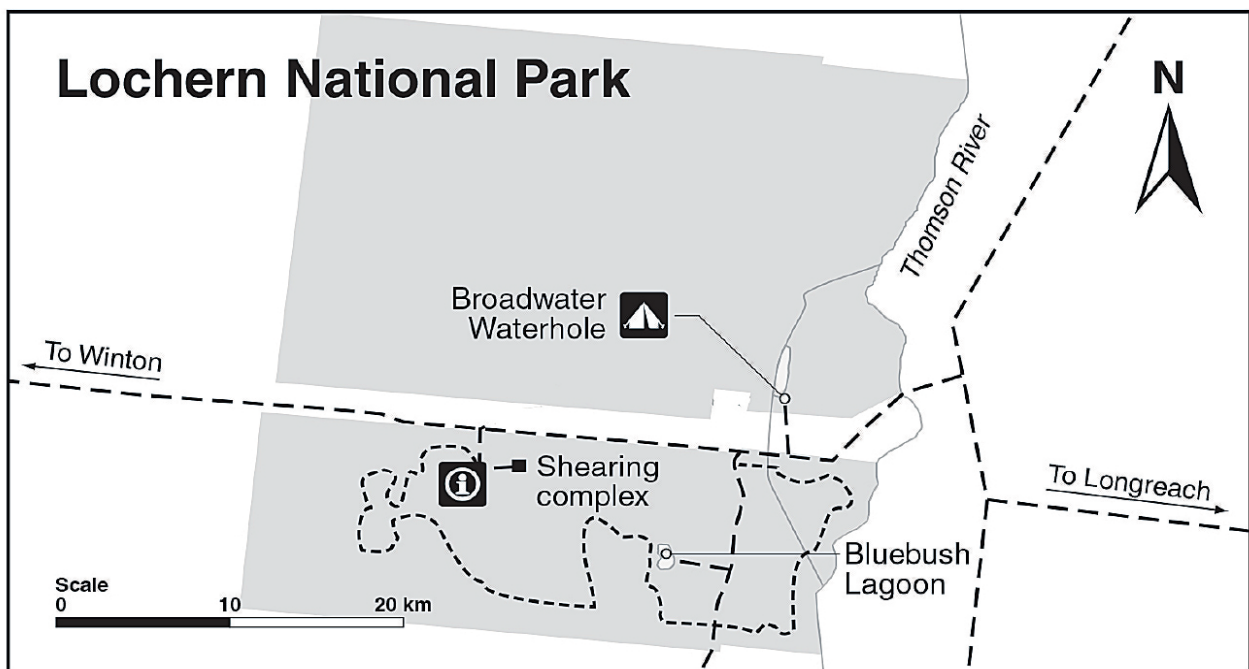
Brushtail possums have been seen in coolibahs beside Broadwater Waterhole. Red kangaroos, eastern grey kangaroos and wallaroos are the most common larger animals.

Camping

Bush camping is permitted at Broadwater Waterhole. No facilities are provided.

Nearby Accommodation

Contact Longreach Tourism
Ph: (07) 4658 4150
E: visitinf@longreach.qld.gov.au
www.longreachtourism.com.au



FOREST DEN NATIONAL PARK - 100 KM NORTH OF ARAMAC

About the park

Forest Den's waterholes, lined with majestic river red gums and coolibahs provide a refuge in dry times. This 5890 ha park conserves a wide diversity of plants, some unique to this reserve within the region—the park was established to conserve black gidgee at its western limit. Although used as grazing land for more than 100 years, little remains of this era apart from a few pastoral relics—fences, gateways and a derelict round timber bridge over Torrens Creek.

Access & facilities

Forest Den National Park is 100 km north of Aramac. Take the Corinda turn-off on Torrens Creek Road and travel east. Turn left after 5 km and head north for a further 4.5 km to Four Mile Waterhole camping area. A four-wheel-drive vehicle is recommended. Forest Den National Park is open all year, however wet weather may cause temporary closures.

For specific information on access for large vehicles and road conditions please contact the Longreach office on (07) 4650 1989.

Park activities & attractions

- The park has no formed walking tracks but you can wander around the creeks and waterholes.
- As Forest Den is relatively quiet and the terrain is gentle, the road is also suitable for walking.
- Follow the winding channels of Torrens and Paradise creeks on the track to Four Mile Waterhole.
- Forest Den's Four Mile Waterhole is the only site accessible by car (four-wheel-drive vehicles only). All other tracks within the park are closed to public access.



FOREST DEN NATIONAL PARK - 100 KM NORTH OF ARAMAC

Wildlife

The cooler hours of dusk and dawn are the best times to observe birds and other wildlife as they come to drink at the waterholes. Whistling kites, brown falcons, and waterbirds including white ibis, royal spoonbills, darters, Pacific herons, egrets, blue-winged kookaburras and rufous-throated honeyeaters nest by the waterholes. You may also see squatter pigeons hiding in the grass. At night watch for sugar gliders and brushtail possums in the trees, or Beccari's freetail bats skimming over water.

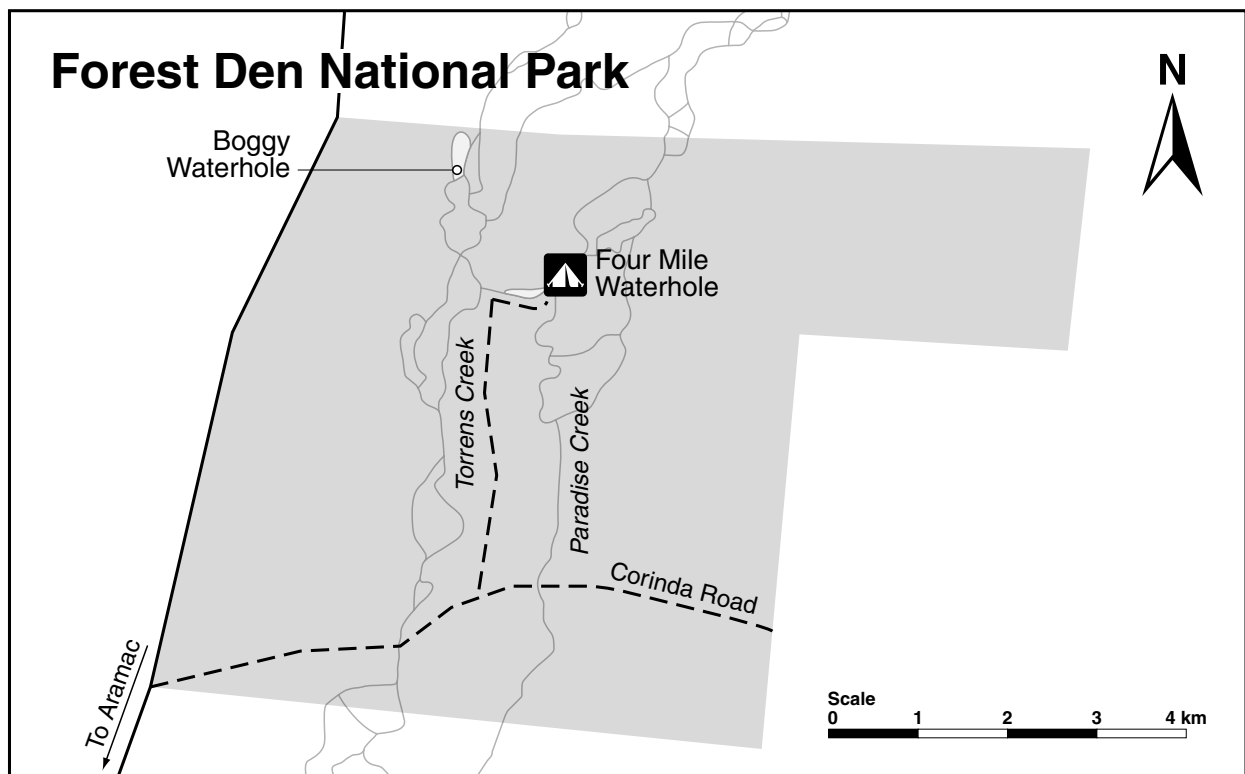
River red gums and coolibahs line the river channels and floodplains, while river teatrees flourish beside deeper waterholes. Other woodland species such as Reid River box, ironwood, beefwood and bauhinia occur on the sandy 'patchy plains' in the park's western sections. These trees create habitat for a range of fascinating wildlife.

Camping

Camping is permitted beside Four Mile Waterhole.

Nearby accommodation

Contact Longreach Tourism
Ph: (07) 4658 4150
E: visitinf@longreach.qld.gov.au
www.longreachtourism.com.au



OUTBACK QUEENSLAND EDUCATION SUBSIDY SCHEME

The Outback Education Tour Subsidy Scheme has been developed to encourage schools to take Year 5,6 and 7 Queensland students to visit Outback Queensland, to learn about the history and heritage of our State.

This scheme will provide a subsidy of up to \$130 per student to assist financially towards their Outback school camp. The subsidy is offered to schools taking students on a camp within the Boundary of Outback Queensland.

The 'Outback' is defined as the Local Government areas of:

North West Queensland:

Flinders, Richmond, McKinlay, Cloncurry and Mount Isa

Central West Queensland:

Barcaldine, Blackall-Tambo, Longreach and Winton

South and Far West Queensland:

Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie, Bulloo, Barcoo, Boulia and Diamantina.

The scheme operates as a subsidy which is paid direct to schools after they have met the eligibility requirements for funding. 50% of the subsidy will be paid upon approval of an application and the remaining 50% will be paid upon the receipt of a completed survey after the excursion. The payment is not meant to cover all costs. Funds are allocated to schools on a per student basis at rates varying according to round trip distance travelled. Funds are to be used to reduce the costs for individual students.

The subsidy rates (excluding GST) are as follows:

<i>Distance travelled from school (round trip)</i>	<i>Funds allocated per student</i>
500 - 999 km	\$50
1,000 - 1,499 km	\$75
1,500 - 1,999 km	\$100
2,000 km and over	\$130

As there is a limited amount of funding, schools are encouraged to apply as early as possible. Each application will be dealt with in order of receipt until funds are exhausted.

Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for the subsidy, schools must be recognised by Tourism Queensland as being schools that are located outside the Outback region. Participating students must be enrolled at the school, and be part of an excursion group whose principal purpose for travelling to the Outback is learning about the history and heritage of Queensland. An eligible school may apply for the subsidy more than one time per calendar year. However, each child attending an eligible school may only attend one excursion with that school each calendar year. Bookings must be made with transportation providers prior to submitting an application. Booking confirmations must be included as part of the application. Itineraries must be provided with applications. Suggested itineraries can be found in the Queensland Outback Education Handbook (www.tq.com.au/outbackeducation), though use of a suggested itinerary is not mandatory. The excursion itinerary must ensure that students spend the majority of their time in Queensland's Outback and all major activities must take place in the region. Schools granted funding are requested to submit a completed survey and report or presentation of their tour to Tourism Queensland within 60 days of the completion of the excursion.

If you would like to apply for the Outback Education Tour Subsidy, please fill out the Outback Queensland Education Tour Subsidy Application Form, and return via email to outbackeducation@queensland.com or fax (07) 3535 5563.

HELPFUL LINKS FOR A SAFE AND RESPONSIBLE VISIT.

Staying safe:

These parks are remote and rangers may not be onsite to help you. You must be self-sufficient, responsible for your own safety, and prepared for emergencies. http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/parks-central-west/about.html#staying_safe

Things to know before you go:

<http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/parks-central-west/about.html#things-to-know-before-you-go>

Looking after the park

http://www.nprsr.qld.gov.au/parks/parks-central-west/about.html#looking_after_the_park

Helpful links to relevant tourism and park management authorities

For the latest information on access, closures and conditions

Go to 'Park Alerts' on www.derm.qld.gov.au/parks or phone 13 74 68.

For fishing rules and guidelines visit Fisheries Queensland, Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation (DEEDI) at www.deedi.qld.gov.au.

For information on road conditions contact the RACQ (Royal Automobile Club of Queensland) at www.racq.com.au (search 'road conditions') or phone 1300 130 595 for 24-hour reports.

Central West Outback Tourism Visitor Information Centres:

Longreach Visitor Information Centre

<http://www.longreachtourism.com.au/visitor-information>

96a Eagle Street, Longreach Qld 4730

Phone: (07) 4658 4150

Email: visitinf@longreach.qld.gov.au

Blackall-Tambo Regional Council/Visitor Information Centre

<http://www.blackalltambotourism.com.au/>

145A Shamrock St, Blackall QLD 447

Phone: 07 4657 4637

Email: bvic@btrc.qld.gov.au

Waltzing Matilda Centre (contact for Dinosaur Trackways)

www.matildacentre.com.au

50 Elderslie Sreet, Winton Qld 4735

Phone: 07 4657 1466 or 1300 665 115

Email: vic@matildacentre.com.au

Barcaldine Tourist Information Centre

www.barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au

Oak Street, Barcaldine (next to the Windmill)

Phone: 07 4651 1724

Email: infocentre@barcaldinerc.qld.gov.au

Wirrarri Visitor Information Centre

www.diamantina.qld.gov.au

29 Burt Street, Birdsville Qld 4482

Phone: 1300 794 257 or 07 4656 3300

Email: info@diamantina.qld.gov.au