

# Australian Capital Territory



The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) was carved out of the Limestone Plains, a region of New South Wales 280km southwest of Sydney and 150km inland from the east coast. Its weathered ranges and quintessential bushland cradle the Australian capital, Canberra, a geometrically designed city housing the symbols and machinery of a nation's aspirations.

Canberra is home to many a national treasure, yet it has also evolved from its bureaucratic origins into a flourishing city of hip cafés, multi-cuisine dining, modish bars and lively festivals. As the nexus of Australian political power it is a city that thrives on networking, business lunches and gossip. Politics, scandals and the latest conspiracy theory are never off the agenda, and power brokers or image breakers can be easily seen or imagined scribbling notes in a Manuka café or a Civic bar.

The city and its suburbs occupy only the top third of the territory. Within the ACT – only 88km north to south and 30km east to west – you can find rustic townships that predate the city and a surprising amount of bushland. Bushwalkers, bird-watchers and connoisseurs of nature will find half the territory is protected as national park or reserve. There's also accessible Aboriginal rock art and splendid camping. For more genteel pursuits there are cool-climate wineries and the meandering Murrumbidgee River to explore. The immediate surrounding region of southeast NSW boasts snowfields, historic towns, more wineries and pristine lakes and rivers and is yet another reason to base yourself in the capital and see the sights.

## HIGHLIGHTS

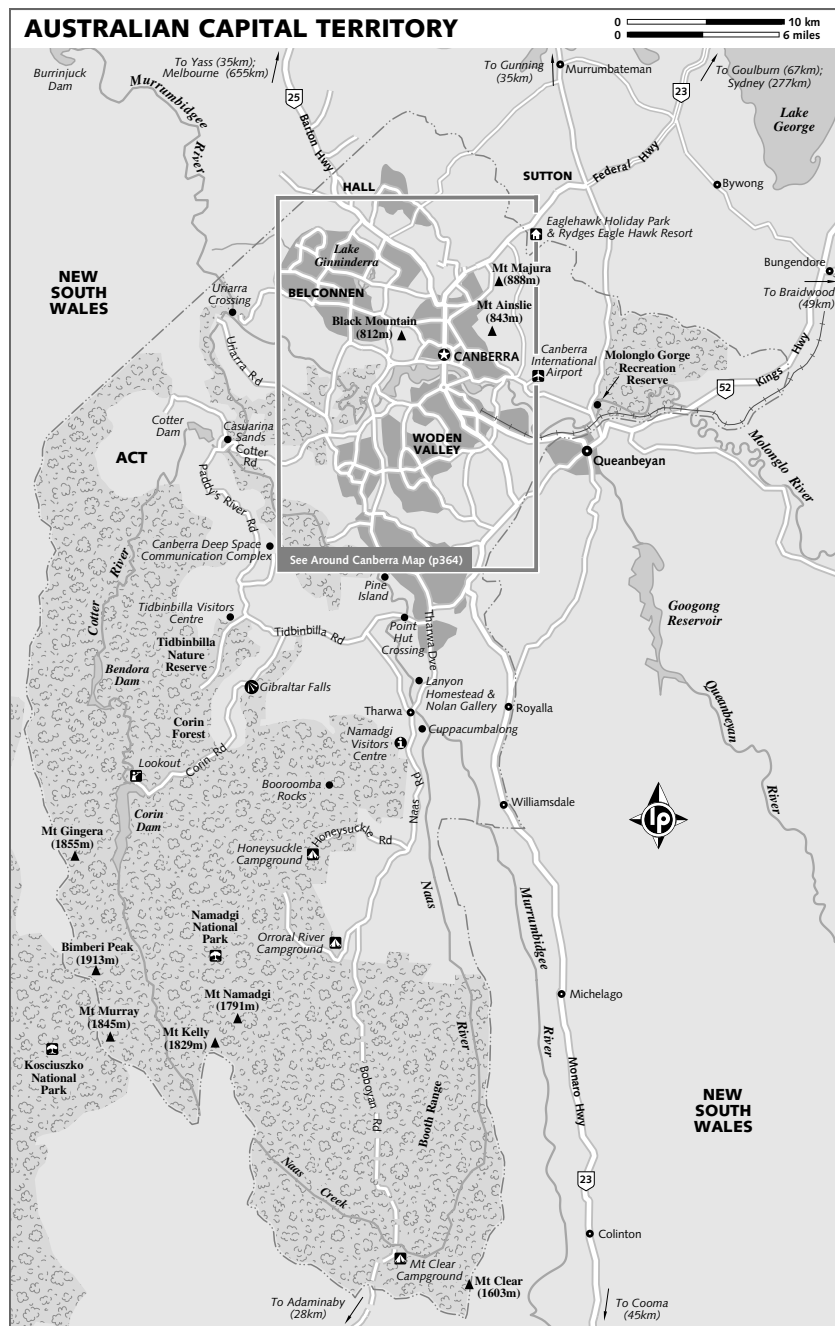
- Peer at the MPs as they reveal their policies and principles at **Parliament House** (p349)
- Stroll the corridors of creativity in the **National Gallery of Australia** (p350)
- Stand silently for the last post at the **Australian War Memorial** (p351)
- Discover the wilderness on your doorstep in **Namadgi National Park** (p365)
- Discuss life and the universe with a representative of indigenous Australia at the **Tent Embassy** (p351)
- Calculate your weight if you were on Mars and marvel at what lies above at the **Canberra Space Centre** (p363)
- Walk, run, cycle or skate around **Lake Burley Griffin** (p349)
- Negotiate the network of Australiana in the **National Museum of Australia** (p351)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 02

■ POPULATION: 323,000

■ AREA: 2366 SQ KM



## CANBERRA

☎ 02 / pop 309,800

Canberra is a celebration of what Australians hold dear – their origins, sacrifices, treasures and values. Iconic cultural landmarks such as the National Museum, National Library, War Memorial, Art Gallery, High Court and Parliament House are symbolic and accessible, informative and free and, with few exceptions, replete with café and souvenir shop. Canberra is the hub of the ACT and of a much greater region of southern NSW. It is orderly and unapologetically suburban, but the days when Canberra was an incubator for a uniform public service are long gone, with more than half the workforce now employed in the private sector.

When you have finished exploring the nation's cultural legacies, houses of power and thriving art scene, don't think that is all Canberra has to offer. There are numerous dining and entertainment options and Canberra is a city that thrives outdoors – lakes, rivers, parks, sporting fields, bush tracks and more are easily reached and the envy of larger cities.

### HISTORY

For over 20,000 years the Ngunnawal Aboriginal people made this country their home. The Ngunnawal were nomadic by necessity. The seasonal abundance of foods, such as the yam daisies of the plains and the bogong moths of the high country, precipitated occasional large gatherings of people, and 'Canberra' or 'Kanberra' is believed to be an Aboriginal term for 'meeting place'. In Namadgi National Park (p365) you can see rock art, while other evidence of traditional occupation lies scattered throughout the ACT.

European settlement began in the 1820s, as pastoralists realised potential in the grasslands of the Limestone Plains. Many Ngunnawal people ended up working on expansive sheep stations. Despite years of persecution, introduced diseases, official disregard and massive environmental change, the Ngunnawal have endured and have increased their profile in recent years.

When Australia's separate colonies were federated in 1901 and became states, the decision to build a national capital was written into the constitution. In 1908 the site – diplomatically situated between the arch-rival

cities of Sydney and Melbourne – was selected, and in 1911 the Commonwealth government created the Federal Capital Territory (changed to the Australian Capital Territory in 1938). American architect Walter Burley Griffin then beat 136 other entries to win an international competition to design the city.

On 12 March 1913, when the foundation stones of the new capital were being laid, the city was officially baptised. Canberra eventually took over from Melbourne as the seat of national government in 1927, but development of the site was slow and virtually stopped during the Depression – real expansion of the city only got under way after WWII.

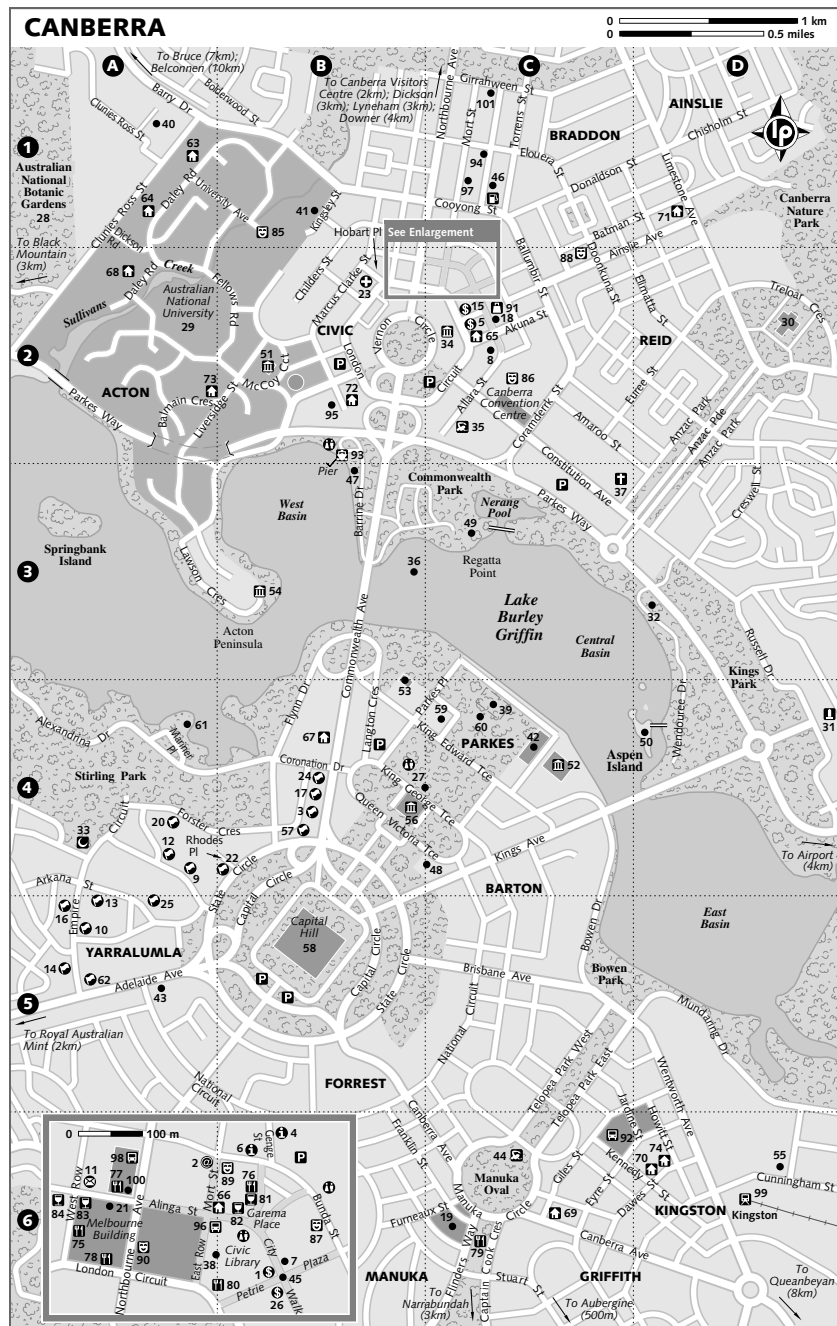
### ORIENTATION

Think crop circles in suburbia and you have an aerial picture of this city conceived on an architect's drawing board with the aid of ruler, compass and protractor. Two great road axes, Kings and Commonwealth Aves, converge at the apex of Capital Hill, which, with Constitution Ave, create Walter Burley Griffin's parliamentary triangle. Located within and near the parliamentary triangle are a number of important buildings, including the National Library of Australia, the High Court of Australia, the National Gallery of Australia and Old and New Parliament Houses. Kings and Commonwealth Aves span Canberra's central water feature – Lake Burley Griffin – complete with spout, and all roads end with roundabouts that will have you (or your navigator) spinning.

The main axis starts north of the city when the Federal and Barton Hwys converge into Northbourne Ave, which then runs south through the suburbs of Downer, Dickson and Braddon before entering Civic, the city centre. After circling City Hill this axis road becomes Commonwealth Ave and heads across Lake Burley Griffin to Capital Hill.

Capital Hill is encircled by State Circle and Capital Circle. Depending on which of these you find yourself on (apparently there is more to it than luck) you can peel off north-east along Kings Ave towards the airport and the War Memorial, east along Brisbane Ave to Kingston, southeast along Canberra Ave to Manuka and Queanbeyan, or west along Adelaide Ave to Deakin.

Parkes Way skirts the northern shore of the lake and you have to be careful not to miss the turn-offs to the National Museum, Black



**INFORMATION**

American Express.....(see 26)  
 ANZ Bank..... 1 B6  
 Bytes Internet Cafe.....(see 92)  
 Cafe Cactus..... 2 A6  
 Canadian High Commission..... 3 B4  
 Citizens Advice Bureau ACT..... 4 B6  
 Commonwealth Bank..... 5 C2  
 Community Information & Referral Service..... 6 B6  
 Dymock's..... 7 B6  
 Electric Shadows Bookshop..... 8 C2  
 French Embassy..... 9 A4  
 German Embassy..... 10 A5  
 GPO..... 11 A6  
 Indonesian Embassy..... 12 A4  
 Irish Embassy..... 13 A5  
 Japanese Embassy..... 14 A5  
 Map World.....(see 98)  
 National Australia Bank..... 15 C2  
 National Library Bookshop.....(see 53)  
 Netherlands Embassy..... 16 A5  
 New Zealand High Commission..... 17 B4  
 NRMA..... 18 C2  
 Paperchain Bookstore..... 19 C6  
 Singapore High Commission..... 20 A4  
 Smiths Alternative Bookshop..... 21 A6  
 South African Embassy..... 22 B4  
 Travelx.....(see 91)  
 Travellers' Medical & Vaccination Centre..... 23 B2  
 UK High Commission..... 24 B4  
 US Embassy..... 25 A5  
 Westpac Bank..... 26 B6

**SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**

Aboriginal Tent Embassy..... 27 B4  
 Australian National Botanic Gardens..... 28 A1  
 Australian National University..... 29 A2  
 Australian War Memorial..... 30 D2  
 Australian-American Memorial..... 31 D4  
 Blundells' Cottage..... 32 D3  
 Canberra Mosque..... 33 A4  
 Canberra Museum & Gallery..... 34 C2  
 Canberra Olympic Pool..... 35 C2  
 Captain Cook Memorial Water Jet..... 36 B3  
 Church of St John the Baptist..... 37 C3  
 Civic Library..... 38 A6  
 Commonwealth Place..... 39 C4  
 CSIRO Discovery..... 40 A1

Drill Hall Gallery..... 41 B1  
 High Court of Australia..... 42 C4  
 Lake Burley Griffin Boat Hire.....(see 93)  
 Lodge..... 43 A5  
 Manuka Swimming Pool..... 44 C6  
 Merry-go-round..... 45 B6  
 Mountain Designs..... 46 C1  
 Mr Spokes Bike Hire..... 47 B3  
 National Archives of Australia..... 48 C4  
 National Capital Exhibition..... 49 C3  
 National Carillon..... 50 D4  
 National Film & Sound Archive..... 51 B2  
 National Gallery of Australia..... 52 C4  
 National Library of Australia..... 53 B4  
 National Museum of Australia..... 54 B3  
 National Portrait Gallery.....(see 56)  
 Old Bus Depot Markets..... 55 D6  
 Old Parliament House..... 56 B4  
 Papua New Guinea High Commission..... 57 B4  
 Parliament House..... 58 B5  
 Questacon - National Science & Technology Centre..... 59 C4  
 Reconciliation Place..... 60 C4  
 St John's Schoolhouse Museum.....(see 37)  
 Southern Cross Yacht Club..... 61 A4  
 Thai Embassy..... 62 A5

**SLEEPING**

Bruce Hall..... 63 A1  
 Burton & Garran Hall..... 64 A1  
 Canberra YHA Hostel..... 65 C2  
 City Walk Hotel..... 66 B6  
 Hyatt Hotel Canberra..... 67 B4  
 John XXIII College..... 68 A2  
 Kingston Hotel..... 69 C6  
 Motel Monaro..... 70 D6  
 Novotel.....(see 98)  
 Olims Hotel Canberra..... 71 D1  
 Pacific International Apartments - Capital Tower..... 72 B2  
 University House..... 73 A2  
 Ursula Lodge.....(see 68)  
 Victor Lodge..... 74 D6

**EATING**

Alanya.....(see 19)  
 Asian Cafe..... 75 A6  
 Cafe in the House.....(see 56)  
 Caffe della Piazza..... 76 B6  
 Cipriani.....(see 92)

First Floor.....(see 92)  
 Food Hall.....(see 91)  
 la pasa..... 77 A6  
 Legends.....(see 19)  
 Lemon Grass..... 78 A6  
 Mecca Bah..... 79 C6  
 My Cafe.....(see 19)  
 Ruchi.....(see 19)  
 Santa Lucia.....(see 92)  
 Silo.....(see 92)  
 Tosolini's..... 80 B6

**DRINKING**

Belgian Beer Cafe.....(see 92)  
 Durham Castle Arms.....(see 92)  
 Filthy McFadden's.....(see 92)  
 Hippo Bar..... 81 B6  
 King O'Malley's..... 82 B6  
 Kremlin.....(see 98)  
 PJ O'Reilly's..... 83 A6  
 Wig & Pen..... 84 A6

**ENTERTAINMENT**

ANU Union Bar..... 85 B1  
 Canberra Theatre Centre.....(see 34)  
 Casino Canberra..... 86 C2  
 Club Mombasa..... 87 B6  
 Electric Shadows Cinema.....(see 8)  
 Gorman House Arts Centre..... 88 C2  
 Greater Union..... 89 B6  
 icbm & Meche..... 90 A6  
 Toast.....(see 8)

**SHOPPING**

Canberra Centre..... 91 C2  
 Craft ACT.....(see 34)  
 Kingston Shopping Centre..... 92 C6  
 Kingston Hotel..... 69 C6  
 Manuka Shopping Centre.....(see 19)

**TRANSPORT**

Action Information Kiosk.....(see 96)  
 Acton Park Ferry Terminal..... 93 B2  
 Avis..... 94 C1  
 Budget..... 95 B2  
 Bus Station (Interstate).....(see 98)  
 Civic Bus Interchange..... 96 A6  
 Countrylink Travel Centre.....(see 98)  
 Guidepost Travel.....(see 98)  
 Hertz..... 97 C1  
 Jolimont Centre..... 98 A6  
 Kingston Train Station..... 99 D6  
 Qantas..... 100 A6  
 Thrifty..... 101 C1

Mountain, and the Botanic Gardens. The rest of the city is made up of suburban satellites: patchworks of brick and tile arranged around cul de sacs and steadily spreading over the erstwhile sheep paddocks and spawning the occasional town centre.

**Maps**

The **NRMA** (Map p346; ☎ 6240 4630; 6 City Walk, Canberra Centre, Civic; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) has the *Canberra & Southeast* map (\$7; free if you

belong to an affiliated motoring organisation), which has a detailed map of Canberra, another of the greater suburban area. On the back are maps of the ACT and southeast NSW and Victoria. The Canberra Visitors Centre (p349) stocks UBD's *Canberra* maps (\$8), pocket-size city maps (\$3), and maps for bushwalking in Namadgi National Park (\$4.50). Map World (p348) and the Namadgi Visitor Centre (p365) stock regional topographic maps.



## INFORMATION Bookshops

**Dymocks Canberra** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 5057; 177 City Walk, Civic) Large, central bookshop with latest releases.

**Electric Shadows Bookshop** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 8352; City Walk, Civic) This bookshop specialises in books on theatre and film, plus gay and lesbian books and rentable arthouse DVDs.

**Map World** (Map p346; ☎ 6230 4097; Jolimont Centre, 65 Northbourne Ave, Civic) Numerous maps and travel guides.

**National Library Bookshop** (Map p346; ☎ 6262 1424; Parkes Pl, Parkes) Stocks exclusively Australian books, including a superb range of fiction.

**Paperchain Bookstore** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 6723; 34 Franklin St, Manuka) Has a wide-ranging book list.

**Smiths Alternative Bookshop** (Map p346; ☎ 6247 4459; 76 Alinga St, Civic) Sells everything from New Age 'science' to gay and lesbian literature.

## Emergency

**Ambulance** (☎ 000, TTY 106)

**Canberra Rape Crisis Centre** (☎ 6247 2525, TTY 6247 1657) 24-hour help.

**Fire** (☎ 000, TTY 106)

**Lifeline** (☎ 13 11 14) 24-hour crisis counselling.

**Police** (☎ 000, TTY 106)

## Internet Access

Public libraries, the Canberra Centre (p361; near the information desk), the interstate bus terminal at the Jolimont Centre (p362) and hostels such as the Canberra YHA Hostel (p356) and Victor Lodge (p356), all have public internet access.

**Bytes Internet Cafe** (Map p346; ☎ 6239 7070; 47 Jardine St, Kingston; per hr \$8; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri; 9.30am-4pm Sat).

**Cafe Cactus** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 0449; 1/7 Mort St, Civic; per hr \$10; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) You can get light meals here.

## Medical Services

**Canberra Hospital** (Map p346; ☎ 6244 2222, emergency dept 6244 2611; Yamba Dr, Garran)

**Capital Chemist** (Map p364; ☎ 6248 7050; Sargood St, O'Connor; ☎ 9am-11pm)

**Travellers' Medical & Vaccination Centre** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 7156; 5th fl, 8-10 Hobart Pl, Civic; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Wed & Fri, to 7pm Thu) Appointment essential.

## Money

Branches of major banks are scattered around the city. Foreign-exchange bureaus include the following.

**American Express** (Map p346; ☎ 1300 139 060; Petrie Plaza, Civic; ☎ 9.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-5pm Fri) Located inside the Westpac bank.

**Travellex** (Map p346; ☎ 1800 637 642; Canberra Centre, Bunda St, Civic; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat) Found inside the Harvey World Travel office.

## Post

Pick up poste restante at the **GPO** (Map p346; ☎ 13 13 18; 53-73 Alinga St, Civic). Mail can be addressed: Poste restante Canberra GPO, Canberra City, ACT 2601.

## CANBERRA IN...

### Two days

Breakfast in a **Kingston** (p359) or **Manuka** (p359) café before taking your time ticking off the parliamentary triangle's sights, such as **Parliament House** (opposite) and **Old Parliament House** (p350), which includes the **National Portrait Gallery**. Drop in on the **Aboriginal Tent Embassy** (p351) and allocate several hours to the **National Gallery** (p350). Catch a breath of crisp morning air exploring the lawns of **Commonwealth Place** (opposite) and **Reconciliation Place** (opposite), as well as along the foreshore of **Lake Burley Griffin** (opposite). As the sun sinks from the western sky witness the sombre history and listen to the Last Post at the **Australian War Memorial** (p351).

### Four days

With four days you can take more time to visit the sights of the parliamentary triangle and perhaps include a visit to the **High Court** (p352), **Questacon** (p352) or the **National Library** (p352). Take a ferry ride to the iconic chaos of the **National Museum** (p351) or talk to the animals at the **National Zoo & Aquarium** (p352). If you have your own transport, you should check out the art and antiques at peaceful **Bungendore** (p365), explore the universe at the **Canberra Space Centre** (p363), or go bush at **Namadgi National Park** (p365).

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The answer is too much in the case of one of the alternative names considered for the national capital – 'Sydmeladperbrisho'. Flora and Fauna found endorsement in the whimsically emblematic 'Kangaromu' and the rather stately 'Eucalyptia'. 'Engirscot' was probably a grand inclusive gesture in its day, to be sure; try to imagine the modern equivalent encompassing Australia's multicultural cocktail! 'Woolgold' points to the sort of economic tunnel vision that can still be tapped at Capital Hill, while 'Empire City', 'Democratia', and 'Federatia' fairly burst off the map with swollen pride and infinite vision (if not imagination).

## Tourist Information

**Canberra Visitors Centre** (Map p346; ☎ 1300 554 114, 6205 0044; www.visitcanberra.com.au; 330 Northbourne Ave, Dickson; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) Operated by the ACT's peak tourist information body, the Canberra Tourism & Events Corporation.

**Citizens Advice Bureau ACT** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 7988; www.citizensadvice.org.au; New Griffin Centre, Genge St, Civic; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Tue & Thu-Fri, to 1pm Wed) Provides information on community services and facilities.

## SIGHTS

Canberra's significant edifices, museums and galleries are dotted around Lake Burley Griffin. Wheelchair-bound visitors will find that most sights are fully accessible. Nearly all attractions close on Christmas Day.

Those keen on visiting Questacon (p352), the Australian Institute of Sport (p353) and Cockington Green (p365) should get a **3-in-1 Ticket** (adult/child/concession/family \$36.40/19.80/26.10/103) giving access to all three attractions; you can buy it at any of the three sites or at the visitors centre.

Bus No 34 from the Civic bus interchange is handy for many of the city sights. For more detailed information on bus services, see p363.

## Lake Burley Griffin

Named after Canberra's architect, Lake Burley Griffin was created by damming the Molonglo River in 1963 with the 33m-high **Scrivener Dam** (Map p364).

Around the lake's 35km shore are many places of interest. The most visible, built in

1970 for the bicentenary of Cook's landfall, is the **Captain Cook Memorial Water Jet** (Map p346; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-4pm, also 7-9pm during daylight saving), which flings a 6-tonne column of water 147m into the air at 500L a second – and sometimes gives free showers, despite its automatic switch-off in strong winds. At nearby **Regatta Point** there's a skeletal bronze globe on which Cook's great voyages are traced. Also here is the **National Capital Exhibition** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 1068; www.nationalcapital.gov.au/exhibition/index.htm; Barrine Dr; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), where the city's history is on display. Just north of here is beautiful **Commonwealth Park** (Map p346), where a series of paths leads you through flower gardens to Nerang Pool.

Further east around the lake is the simple stone-and-slab **Blundells' Cottage** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 1068; Wendouree Dr; adult/child/family \$4/2/10; ☎ 11am-4pm), built in 1860 to house workers on the surrounding estate and now a reminder of the area's early farming history.

On Aspen Island, at the far end of Commonwealth Park, is the 50m-high **National Carillon** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 1068; ☎ recitals 12.45-1.35pm Tue & Thu, 2.45-3.35pm Sat & Sun), a gift from Britain on Canberra's 50th anniversary in 1963 and opened seven years later. The tower's 55 bronze bells weigh from 7kg to six tonnes. Bookings are required for Carillon **tours** (adult/child/family \$8/4/20; ☎ 12.45pm Mon, Wed & Fri).

On the northern shore fronting Old Parliament House and between the High Court and Questacon is **Reconciliation Place** (Map p346), where artworks represent the nation's commitment to reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians. A walkway slices into the well-maintained lawns along Burley Griffin's land axis to link with **Commonwealth Place** (Map p346), a ceremonial venue with an international flag display, a Southern Cross-shaped grove of trees and Speakers Square, the Centenary of Federation Gift from the Canadian government.

Swimming in the lake is not recommended, but it's OK for boating, and the lake shore is great to cycle or walk around. Boats and bikes are available for hire at Acton Park ferry terminal on the northern shore; see p354.

## Parliament House

The striking **Parliament House** (Map p346; ☎ 6277 5399; www.aph.gov.au; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) is worth a few hours' exploration (see the boxed text p350).

## DESIGN FOR A NATION

Parliament House is another aspect of Walter Burley Griffin's vision to become reality. Opened in 1988, it took \$1.1 billion and eight years to build and replaced the Old Parliament House, which served 11 years longer than its intended temporary 50 years. It was designed by Romaldo Giurgola of Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp architects, winner of a design competition that attracted 329 entries from 28 countries. Its splendid interior incorporates different combinations of Australian timbers in each main section and more than 3000 original artworks.

The structure was built into the hillside and covered by grass to preserve the site's original landscape. Great swathes of neatly clipped lawn gently rise over the roof where a shiny metallic flagpole soars 81m to hoist a flag the size of a double-decker bus, a monumental, if unintentional, tribute to the Aussie backyard, the galvanised Hill's hoist and a beach towel.

The main axis of Parliament House runs northeast-southwest in a direct line with Old Parliament House, the Australian War Memorial and Mt Ainslie, Burley Griffin's original 'land axis'. Two high, granite-faced walls curve out from the axis to the corners of the building; the House of Representatives (east of the walls) and the Senate (to the west) are linked to the centre by covered walkways.

Enter the building across the 90,000-piece **forecourt mosaic** by Michael Nelson Tjakamarra – the theme of which is 'a meeting place' – representing possum and wallaby Dreaming, and through the white marble **Great Verandah** at the northeastern end of the main axis. In the **foyer**, the grey-green marble columns symbolise a forest, and marquetry wall panels are inlaid with designs of Australian flora.

The first floor overlooks the **Great Hall** and, hanging outside the hall, its 20m-long **tapestry**, inspired by the original Arthur Boyd painting of eucalypt forest. Beyond it is the **Members' Hall**. In the public gallery above the Great Hall is the 16m-long **embroidery**, created by more than 500 members of the Embroiders Guild of Australia. Both works make subtle references to European settlement.

The Great Hall is the centre of the building, with the flagpole above it and passages to chambers on each side. One of only four known copies of the 1297 **Magna Carta** is on display here – so close you could almost touch it, if it wasn't for the gas-filled, glass casing. South of the Members' Hall are the committee rooms and ministers' offices; visitors are welcome to view committee rooms and attend some of the proceedings.

There are free 45-minute guided tours on non-sitting days and 20-minute tours on sitting days (every half-hour from 9am to 4pm daily), but you're welcome to self-navigate and watch parliamentary proceedings from the public galleries. Tickets for question time (2pm on sitting days) in the **House of Representatives** are free but must be booked through the **Sergeant at Arms** (☎ 6277 4889); tickets aren't required for the **Senate Chamber**. Visitors can catch a lift to the roof to gaze up at the flag pole or down on the city. You can also explore the rooftop lawns and 23 hectares of landscaped gardens.

## Old Parliament House

The venerable **Old Parliament House** (Map p346; ☎ 6270 8222; www.oph.gov.au; King George Tce, Parkes; adult/concession/family \$2/1/5; ☎ 9am-5pm) was the seat of government from 1927 to 1988 and is a great place to get a whiff of bygone parliamentary activity, be it peering through the spy hole into the prime minister's office, re-acquainting

yourself with the 1975 dismissal, silently addressing the House of Representatives, or buying your own Hansard bookend from the gift shop. There are free **guided tours** (45 min; ☎ 9.30am, 10.15am, 11am, 11.45am, 12.45pm, 1.30pm, 2.15pm, 3pm & 3.45pm), or pick up the *Self-Guided Tour* brochure. It also has a wonderful café (p360).

The building incorporates the mesmerising **National Portrait Gallery** (☎ 6270 8210; www.portrait.gov.au), which exhibits painting, photography and new-media portraiture. It has a lakeside annexe at Commonwealth Place (Map p346).

Opposite the main entrance to Old Parliament House is the culturally significant **Aboriginal Tent Embassy** (Map p346).

## National Gallery of Australia

The **National Gallery** (Map p346; ☎ 6240 6502; www.nga.gov.au; Parkes Pl, Parkes; permanent collection admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) has a stunning collection of over 100,000 works of art representing

four major areas: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, Australian (from colonial to contemporary), Asian, and international. Plus a spectacular new Art of the Indian Subcontinent gallery showcasing one of the largest collections of paintings, bronzes and sculptures outside India. The Australian treasures range from traditional Aboriginal art to Sydney Nolan's Ned Kelly series, and all the Australian greats are well represented.

Sharing gallery space with paintings are sculptures (visit the Sculpture Garden), drawings, photographs, furniture, ceramics, fashion, textiles and silverware. Visiting exhibitions usually attract an admission fee. In addition to regular all-inclusive **guided tours** (☎ 11am & 2pm), there's also a **tour** (☎ 11am Thu & Sun) focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art.

## Australian War Memorial

Opened in 1941, the massive **war memorial** (Map p346; ☎ 6243 4211; www.awm.gov.au; Treloar Cres, Campbell; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) looks along Anzac Pde to Old and New Parliament Houses across the lake. The building houses an enormous collection of pictures, dioramas, relics and exhibitions detailing the events, weapons and human toll of wartime; most of the heavy machinery is arrayed within **Anzac Hall**, which features an impressive **sound-and-light show** (☎ hourly from 10am). Entombed among the mosaics of the Hall of Memory is the **Unknown**

**Australian Soldier**, whose remains were returned from a WWI battlefield in 1993 and who symbolises all Australian war casualties.

There are free 90-minute **guided tours**; alternatively, purchase the *Self-guided Tour* leaflet (\$3).

Along **Anzac Pde**, which is Canberra's broad commemorative way, are 11 poignant memorials to various campaigns and campaigners.

## National Museum of Australia

This **museum** (Map p346; ☎ 1800 026 132, 6208 5000; www.nma.gov.au; Lawson Cres, Acton Peninsula; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) is one big abstract Australian storybook. Using creativity, controversy, humour and self-contradiction, the National Museum dismantles national identity, and in the process provokes visitors to come up with ideas of their own. From the skewed angles of the architecture to the use of interactive technology, it's an inspiring collision of aesthetics. There are lots of attendants on hand to help you navigate exhibitions on environmental change, indigenous culture, national icons and more, and you can take one-hour **guided tours** (adult/child/family \$7.50/5/20). It can be a bit confusing and it's recommended that you don't miss the introductory 'C' show. While general admission is free, a fee is usually charged to access visiting exhibitions. Pick up a copy of the Calendar of Events to see what special shows and exhibits are on.

## THE ABORIGINAL TENT EMBASSY

A smouldering log fire, a lop-sided tent and a wobbly caravan outside Old Parliament House are just too intriguing for the Beijing tourists. A discussion rambles from the British Crown's German ancestry (a bronzed King George stands nearby), to how long the fire has been burning, to a discussion on land rights, and finally a photo with Robert Craigie. 'My photo must be all around the world. We get them all here. They know ... everybody comes.' Robert is a Murri from Kamilaroi country, around Moree, NSW. His elder brother Billy was one of the original four 'representatives' who established the 'embassy' and spent that first cold night sheltering under an umbrella. On this sunny almost-spring day, Robert is one of the few left at the Tent Embassy while the area is being rested – the grass and trees are given a chance to rejuvenate the traditional way.

The Tent Embassy was established on Australia Day, 26 January 1972 as a protest against the denial of land rights and self-determination. Through official condemnation and destruction, followed by phoenix-like revival, it quickly became a symbol of resistance and is where the Aboriginal flag first gained prominence. Since then the Tent Embassy has waxed and waned over the decades and the politicians built a bigger house in their backyard and moved away. But this poignant camp always manages to remind the world, especially on Australia/Sovereignty/Invasion Day, that Australia still has much to do in regard to reconciliation, land rights and the fair treatment of its indigenous people. As a living, breathing reality check and education facility, it has no peers. The most recent threat to the embassy is to replace it with yet another static museum/memorial, presumably with a digital visitors counter and café.

Bus No 34 runs here. There's also a free bus on weekends and public holidays, departing regularly from 10.30am from platform 7 in the Civic bus interchange.

### High Court of Australia

The grandiose **High Court** (Map p346; ☎ 6270 6811; www.hcourt.gov.au; Parkes Pl, Parkes; admission free; ☎ 9.45am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, closed public holidays) was dubbed 'Gar's Mahal' when it opened in 1980, a reference to Sir Garfield Barwick, chief justice during the building's construction.

The rarefied heights of the foyer (that's a 24m-high ceiling!) and main courtroom are in keeping with the building's name and position as the highest court in the Australian judicial system. Have a chat to a knowledgeable attendant about judicial life, and check out the murals and paintings adorning the walls. High Court sittings, which usually occur for two weeks each month (except January and July), are open to the public.

### Questacon

The hands-on **National Science & Technology Centre** (aka Questacon; Map p346; ☎ 1800 020 603, 6270 2800; www.questacon.edu.au; adult/child/concession/family \$15.50/9/10.50/46; ☎ 9am-5pm) is a child magnet, with its lively, educational and just-plain-fun interactive exhibits on the merits of everyday science and technology. Within the spiral arrangement of galleries, kids can explore the physics of sport, athletics and fun parks, cause tsunamis and take shelter from cyclones and earthquakes. There are also exciting science shows, presentations and puppet shows included in the admission price.

### National Zoo & Aquarium

Nestled behind Scrivener Dam is this engaging **zoo and aquarium** (Map p364; ☎ 6287 8400; www.nationalzoo.com.au; Lady Denman Dr, Yarralumla; adult/child/concession/family \$21.50/11.50/17.50/62.50; ☎ 10am-5pm), to which you should definitely devote a few hours. It has a roll call of fascinating animals, ranging from capuchins to sharks, and includes Australia's largest collection of big cats, including tigers (the unnatural result of breeding tigers with lions in captivity, a practice that has thankfully been discontinued). Heavily promoted are the additional tours where you can cuddle a cheetah (\$150) or take a **tour** (adult/child from \$125/65) behind the scenes to hand-feed a tiger, and much more.

### Australian National Botanic Gardens

Spread over 90 invigorating hectares on Black Mountain's lower slopes are these beautiful **gardens** (Map p346; ☎ 6250 9450; www.anbg.gov.au/anbg; Clunies Ross St, Acton; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mar-Dec, to 6pm weekdays & 8pm weekends Jan), devoted to the growth, study and promotion of Australian floral diversity. While enjoying the gardens' tranquillity, take the **Aboriginal Plant Use Walk** (1km, 45 minutes), which passes through the cool **Rainforest Gully**. The **Eucalypt Lawn** is peppered with 600 species of this quintessential Aussie tree.

The **visitors centre and bookshop** (☎ 9.30am-4.30pm) is the departure point for free guided **walks** (☎ 11am and 2pm, also 10am summer). Nearby is **Hudsons in the Gardens** (☎ 6248 9680; mains \$10-15; ☎ breakfast & lunch), a pleasant café with a verdant aspect.

### Canberra Museum & Gallery

This stylish **museum and gallery** (Map p346; ☎ 6207 3968; www.museumsandgalleries.act.gov.au/museum/index.asp; Civic Sq, London Circuit, Civic; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-5pm Sat & Sun) is ostensibly devoted to Canberra's social history and visual arts. The interesting permanent exhibition, 'Reflecting Canberra', includes a charred dishwasher salvaged from a house destroyed in the 2003 bushfire, while visiting collections have run the aesthetic gamut from traditional Palestinian crafts to Korean sculptors. The museum also holds talks and craft-oriented workshops.

### National Film & Sound Archive

This **archive** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 2000; www.nfsa.afc.gov.au; McCoy Circuit, Acton; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) preserves Australian moving-picture and sound recordings for posterity. Highlights include the absorbing permanent exhibition 'Sights + Sounds of a Nation', 100 years of audio and visual recordings, from Norman Gunston's idiosyncratic interviews to the 1943 Oscar-awarded propaganda flick *Kokoda Front Line*. There are also temporary exhibitions, talks and film screenings.

### National Library of Australia

The **National Library** (Map p346; ☎ 6262 1111; www.nla.gov.au; Parkes Pl, Parkes; admission free; ☎ main reading room 9am-9pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Fri & Sat, 1.30-5pm Sun) was established in 1901 and has since accumulated over six million items, most of which can be accessed in one of eight reading rooms. Be

sure to check out the **Exhibition Gallery** (admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) highlighting visual treats collated from the library's diverse collections as well as the artworks dotted around the library and its grounds. Bookings are required for the free customised **guided tours** (☎ 6262 1271) or simply join the **Behind-the-Scenes Tour** (☎ 12.30pm Thu).

### National Archives of Australia

Canberra's original post office now houses the **National Archives** (Map p346; ☎ 6212 3600; www.naa.gov.au; Queen Victoria Tce, Parkes; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), a repository for Commonwealth government records in the form of personal papers, photographs, posters, films, maps and paintings. There are short-term special exhibits, such as Robin Archer's recent 'Unexpected Archives'. But the centrepiece exhibit is the **Federation Gallery** and its original charters, including Australia's 1900 Constitution Act and the 1967 amendment ending constitutional discrimination against Aboriginal people. Records of military service and emigration can be accessed for those keen on exploring their ancestry or unearthing a family secret.

### Royal Australian Mint

To see Australia's biggest money-making operation, visit the **Mint** (Map p364; ☎ 6202 6800; www.ramint.gov.au; Denison St, Deakin; admission free; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun). It has a gallery showcasing the history of Australian coinage, where you can learn about the 1813 'holey dollar' and its enigmatic offspring, the 'dump'. Also on show are Mint-produced official insignia and Sydney Olympics medals. Plate-glass windows give a view to the production of proof (collectable) coins and circulating coins; note that production ceases over the weekend.

As a souvenir, you can mint your own brand-new \$1 coin, complete with a special 'c' mark. And to emphasise that you're in the cradle of capitalism, it'll cost you \$2.50.

### Australian National University (ANU)

The attractive, busy grounds of the **ANU** (Map p346; ☎ 6125 5111; www.anu.edu.au) have taken up most of the area between Civic and Black Mountain since 1946 and make for a pleasant wander. Drop into the **Drill Hall Gallery** (Map p346; ☎ 6125 5832; Kingsley St; admission free; ☎ noon-5pm Wed-Sun) to see special exhibitions and paintings from the university's art collection; a per-

manent fixture is Sidney Nolan's *Riverbend*, with its near-phosphorescent hue. While you're here, collect the ANU *Sculpture Walk* brochure and explore the outdoor art.

### Australian Institute of Sport (AIS)

The country's elite and aspiring-elite athletes hone their sporting prowess at the **AIS** (Map p364; ☎ 6214 1444; www.ausport.gov.au/tours; Leverrier Cres, Bruce). The 90-minute **tours** (adult/child/concession/family \$13/7/10/36; ☎ 10am, 11.30am, 1pm & 2.30pm) are led by resident athletes, with information on training routines and diets, displays on Australian champions and the Sydney Olympics, and interactive exhibits where you can publicly humble yourself at basketball, rowing and skiing.

### Lookouts

**Black Mountain** (812m) is topped by the 195m-high **Telstra Tower** (Map p364; ☎ 6219 6111; Black Mountain Dr; adult/child \$4.40/1.90; ☎ 9am-10pm), which has a great windblown vista, plus a display on the history of local telecommunications and a revolving restaurant (p360). A 2km bush-lined walking track to the top starts on nearby Frith Rd, while other tracks wander northwest around the other side of the mountain from Belconnen Way and Caswell Dr; you can get a basic walking-tracks map from the tower.

**Mt Ainslie**, just northeast of the city, stands at 843m and is one of the anchors for the Anzac Parade axis. Therefore it has particularly fine views of the city's layout and is best in the morning and at night. It's an easy drive and walking tracks to the mountain start behind the Australian War Memorial and end 4km further on at 888m-high **Mt Majura**.

### Other Attractions

You can only peek through the gates of the prime minister's official residence, the **Lodge** (Map p346; Adelaide Ave, Deakin), and peer across the lawns to the governor general's official residence, **Government House** (Map p364; Dunrossil Dr, Yarralumla) near the **Scrivener Dam lookout** (Map p364; Lady Denman Dr, Yarralumla).

Canberra's 80-odd embassies and high commissions are mostly nondescript houses in Yarralumla, but several are architecturally interesting and periodically open to the public. The **Thai embassy** (Map p346; Empire Circuit, Yarralumla), with its pagoda-style, orange-tiled roof, is reminiscent of Bangkok temples. The **Papua New Guinea high commission** (Map p346;



☎ 6273 3322; Forster Cres, Yarralumla) resembles a *haus tamberan* (spirit house) from the Sepik region and has a **cultural display** (🕒 9am-1pm & 2-4pm Mon-Fri). A comprehensive list of the diplomatic missions and their addresses is available from the National Capital Exhibition (p349).

At the eastern end of Kings Ave is the 79m-tall **Australian-American Memorial** (Map p346; Kings Ave, Russell), a pillar topped by an eagle that, from a distance, resembles Bugs Bunny's ears. The memorial recognises US support for Australia during WWII.

The **Church of St John the Baptist** (Map p346; Constitution Ave, Reid) was finished in 1845, its stained-glass windows donated by pioneer families. The **St John's Schoolhouse Museum** (Map p346; ☎ 6249 6839; Constitution Ave, Reid; admission by donation; 🕒 10am-noon Wed, 2-4pm Sat & Sun), adjoining the church, houses memorabilia from Canberra's first school.

The **Canberra Bicycle Museum** (Map p364; ☎ 6247 1363; www.canberrabicyclemuseum.com.au; 3 Rosevear Pl; admission by donation; 🕒 10am-4pm Wed, 11am-3pm Sat) has an astonishing collection of old clankers, including a penny farthing and the aptly named Boneshaker. You can make planetary observations at the **Canberra Space Dome & Observatory** (Map p364; ☎ 6248 5333; www.ctc.asn.au/planetarium; 72 Hawdon Pl, Dickson; adult/child/family \$10/6/28; 🕒 7.30 & 8.30pm winter, 7.30 & 9.30pm summer, Tue-Sat); bookings are essential. And you can learn about innovative scientific research taking place in Australia—such as virtual reality, gene technology and climate research at **CSIRO Discovery** (Map p346; ☎ 6246 4646; www.csiro.au; Clunies Ross St, Acton; adult/child/family \$6/3/15; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri).

For other sights just a short drive from Canberra, see p363.

## ACTIVITIES

Thanks to the ACT's lakes and mountains, not to mention a pretty good climate, there are plenty of vitalising activities on offer here.

## Boating

**Lake Burley Griffin Boat Hire** (Map p346; ☎ 6249 6861; Acton Jetty, Civic; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-dusk Sat & Sun, closed May-Aug) has canoe, kayak, surf-ski and paddleboat hire (kayaks from \$12 per hour).

## Bushwalking

**Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve** (p365), southwest of the city, has numerous marked tracks.

Another great area for walking is **Namadgi National Park** (p365), which is one end of the difficult, 655km-long Australian Alps Walking Track; the other end is Walhalla in Victoria.

Local bushwalking maps and guides are available at **Map World** (Map p346; ☎ 6230 4097; Jolimont Centre, 65 Northbourne Ave, Civic) and **Mountain Designs** (Map p346; ☎ 6247 7488; 6 Lonsdale St, Braddon). The *Namadgi National Park* map (\$4.50), available from the Canberra and Namadgi visitors centres, details 22 walks in the area.

## Cycling

Canberra has one of the most extensive cycle-path networks of any Australian city, with dedicated routes making it almost possible to tour the city without touching a road. One popular track circles the lake, while others shadow the Murrumbidgee River. The visitors centre sells the *Canberra Cycleways* map (\$6) and the *Canberra & Queanbeyan Cycling & Walking Map* (\$8), the latter published by **Pedal Power Act** (www.pedalpower.org.au) for super-keen recreational cyclists.

**Mr Spokes Bike Hire** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 1188; Barrine Dr, Civic; 🕒 9am-5pm Wed-Sun, daily during school holidays) is located near the Acton Park ferry terminal. Bike hire per hour/half-/full-day costs \$12/30/40. Canberra YHA Hostel (p356) and Victor Lodge (p356) also rent bikes and **Row'n'Ride** (☎ 0410-547 838) delivers bikes (hired per day/week \$40/95) to your door. As well as providing bike hire (\$40 per day), **Brindabella Bike Tours** (☎ 6242 6276, 0407-426 276) naturally enough runs cycling tours (see p356).

## Swimming

Canberra's swimming pools include the **Canberra International Sports & Aquatics Centre** (Map p364; ☎ 6251 7888; www.clubgroup.com.au/home; 100 Eastern Valley Way, Bruce; adult/child \$4.80/3.50; 🕒 6am-9pm Mon-Fri, 7am-7pm Sat & Sun). **Canberra Olympic Pool** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 6799; Allara St, Civic; adult/child \$4.70/3; 🕒 6am-8.30pm Mon-Thu, to 7.50pm Fri, 7am-6pm Sat, 8am-6pm Sun) and the National Trust-listed 75-year-old **Manuka Swimming Pool** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 1349; Manuka Circle, Manuka; adult/child \$4/3; 🕒 6.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar, usually closed Apr-Oct).

See Murrumbidgee River Corridor (p363) for more information on inviting waterholes around the city.

## WALKING TOUR Parliamentary Precinct Walk

Canberra is widely spread, but many of its major attractions are in or near the parliamentary triangle defined by Lake Burley Griffin, Commonwealth Ave and Kings Ave.

The focus of the triangle is **Parliament House** (1; p349) on Capital Hill. Heading north from here along Commonwealth Ave towards the lake, you'll pass the Canadian, New Zealand and UK **high commissions** on your left. Turn right (east) at Coronation Dr to King George Tce and **Old Parliament House** (2; p350), which houses the **National Portrait Gallery**. Opposite the main entrance to Old Parliament House is the **Aboriginal Tent Embassy** (3).

Head southeast along King George Tce and turn left at Parkes Pl, across King Edward Tce, to the grand **High Court of Australia** (4; p352), with its ornamental watercourse burbling alongside the path to the entrance. Next door, across Parkes Pl, is the wonderful **National Gallery of Australia** (5; p350), where you can imbibe caffeine as well as culture.

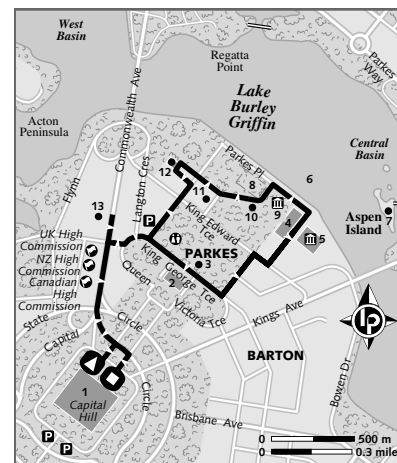
Follow Parkes Pl down to shores of **Lake Burley Griffin** (6; p349) where you'll see and perhaps hear the **National Carillon** (7; p349) on Aspen Island. Turn left towards **Commonwealth**

### WALK FACTS

**Start/Finish** Capital Hill

**Distance** 6km

**Duration** 2-3 hours



**Place** (8; p349), where you can examine famous heads at the annexe of the **National Portrait Gallery** (9; p350) and explore indigenous issues through art at nearby **Reconciliation Place** (10; p349).

Cross diagonally (northwest) over the lawns to **Questacon** (11; p352), Canberra's interactive science museum. From here, cross the Parkes Pl (northwest) to arrive at the **National Library of Australia** (12; p352). Head back up Parkes Pl to Coronation Dr, cross the busy Commonwealth Ave and head north to the Art Nouveau classic **Hyatt Hotel** (13; p358) for a well-earned refreshment.

## CANBERRA FOR CHILDREN

Keeping your children occupied in Canberra is easy. There's lots of free stuff and outdoor activities, but some of the big-ticket attractions have big-ticket prices and strategically placed souvenir shops. Also watch out for the family-ticket small print where more than two kids is considered a rort.

The visitors centre has the *Kidfriendly* brochure (www.kidfriendly.com.au), a *Parks & Playgrounds* leaflet and a map of skate parks.

For the stroller-bound head for the (free) **Australian National Botanic Gardens** (p352), where hills, fresh air and exercise, and a café will keep you happy and them happy or, even better, asleep. For more demanding budding Attenboroughs you will have to fork out for the tooth and claw distractions of the **National Zoo & Aquarium** (p352), or drape them in a python at the **Australian Reptile Centre** (p365). The littlest littles will appreciate a spin on Civic's landmark **merry-go-round** (Map p346).

For hands-on quirky science and lots of noise visit **Questacon** (p352). Another place with a scientific bent is **CSIRO Discovery** (p353), where you can don a lab coat and come to grips with virtual reality or a stick insect. Budding capitalists can mint their own money at the **Royal Australian Mint** (p353).

Miniature steam-train rides around a miniature village can be had at **Cockington Green Gardens** (p365). There's also a plethora of museums custom-built for curiosity and active imaginations, among them the **National Dinosaur Museum** (p365) and the **National Museum of Australia** (p351) where you will probably be able to lose them, if not yourself, for a while.

Energy levels can be further accommodated by a swim at a Canberra **pool** (opposite) or **water-hole** (p363), or by hiring **bikes** (opposite).

## TOURS

**Aquila Helicopters** (☎ 0412 066 766; www.aquilahelicopters.com.au; Canberra International Airport; flights from \$70) For aerial views.

**Balloon Aloft** (☎ 6285 1540; www.balloon.canberra.net.au; adult/child from \$230/160) For quieter aerial views.

**Brindabella Bike Tours** (☎ 6242 6276, 0407-426 276; www.brindabellabiketours.com; half/full day tours \$55/95) Bikes, equipment and refreshments provided. Half-day Canberra sightseeing or full-day wilderness touring. Complimentary pick-up and drop-off.

**Canberra Day Tours** (☎ 0418 455099; www.canberra daytours.com.au) Shuttles you around various capital sites all day for \$40/35 adult/child, including entry fees. This hop-on hop-off service is called the *Red Explorer* bus and there are five services kicking off from the Melbourne Building, Northbourne Ave. The first service leaves at 9.30am, the last at 3pm. Check the website or pick up a brochure at the visitors centre for a timetable.

**Go Bush Tours** (☎ 6231 3023; www.gobushtours.com.au) Reputable tailored excursions around Canberra, including a circuit of city lookouts (adult/concession from \$40/35) and a day-long exploration of Namadgi National Park (adult/concession \$120/80) They have a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

**Southern Cross Yacht Club** (☎ 6273 1784; www.sccs.com.au; 1 Mariner Pl, Yarralumla; adult/child \$15/9) Provides a sightseeing cruise aboard the MV *Southern Cross* departing 3pm daily.

**SS Maid Marion** (☎ 0418-828 357; adult/child \$12/5) Operates one-hour cruises that pick-up/drop-off at lakeside locales such as Regatta Point ferry terminal, the National Library and the National Museum.

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

For a comprehensive listing of Canberra's festival calendar see [www.visitcanberra.com.au](http://www.visitcanberra.com.au).

### January

**Summernats Car Festival** (www.summernats.com.au) Hot rods and custom cars rev up at Exhibition Park.

**Australia Day Live** (www.austrialiadaylive.gov.au) The annual 25 January live concert on the lawns of Federal Parliament featuring the hottest names in Australian music.

### February

**National Multicultural Festival** (www.multicultural festival.com.au) Celebrated over 10 days, with most events in Commonwealth Park.

**Royal Canberra Show** (www.mcas.org.au/showweb site/main.html)

### March

**Celebrate Canberra** (www.celebratecanberra.com)

The city's extended birthday party, which kicks off with a day-long food, drinks and arts feast.

### March/April

**National Folk Festival** (www.folkfestival.asn.au) One of the country's largest folk festivals.

### June

**National Capital DanceSport Championships**

Competition ballroom dancing at its glitziest best.

### September/October

**Floriade** (www.floriadeaustralia.com) A celebration of Canberra's spectacular spring flowers.

## SLEEPING

Most hotels and motels are strung along Northbourne Ave or hidden in northern suburbs like Ainslie, Braddon, O'Connor and Downer. The other main accommodation area lies south around Capital Hill, particularly in the politician-favoured domains of Kingston and Barton. When parliament is sitting it pays to book ahead. Inexpensive motel accommodation can be found in Queanbeyan (p365), 12km southeast of Canberra.

## Budget

### HOSTELS

**Canberra YHA Hostel** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 9155; www.yha.com.au; 7 Akuna St, Civic; dm \$24-27, d/f \$70/100; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This bright, well-run hostel has an impressive list of services including a pool, 24-hour reception, a bar and self-catering kitchen and cable TV. It remains fond of backpackers, but has all the facilities (except parking) to attract families seeking central, reasonably priced rooms.

**Victor Lodge** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 7777; www.victor lodge.com.au; 29 Dawes St, Kingston; dm/\$ \$27/59, d & tw \$76; ☎ ☎ ☎) This is a good option if you need to park a vehicle and it is very handy to the Kingston cafés and shops. The rooms are compact and the bathrooms shared. There's linen provided, use of a commercial kitchen, a barbecue area, filling breakfasts and bicycle hire, plus a helping hand if you need info on local attractions. They'll pick you up from Jolimont or the train station if need be; otherwise catch bus No 38, 39 or 80 from Civic.

### HOTELS

**Kingston Hotel** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 0123; 73 Canberra Ave, Griffith; dm \$20, bed linen \$5; ☎) The Kingston is a blue-collar pub with very basic pub rooms (each with a double bunk) that share bathrooms. It's a noisy and lively venue where you can throw a steak on the grill in the bistro,

wrestle a poker machine or join the crowd at the bar.

**City Walk Hotel** (Map p346; ☎ 1800 600 124, 6257 0124; www.citywalkhotel.com.au; 2 Mort St, Civic; dm \$28, s \$55-85, d \$70-95, f \$110) This five-storey budget hotel is smack in the middle of Civic and the compact rooms are pretty good shape thanks to the smoking ban. The more expensive rooms have private bathrooms.

### HALLS OF RESIDENCE

Some of the ANU's pleasant halls of residence rent out rooms from late November to late February during university holidays. Most offer similar facilities and room prices start from around \$50 (up to \$15 more for B&B).

**Bruce Hall** (Map p346; ☎ 6267 4000) and **Burton & Garran Hall** (Map p346; ☎ 6267 4333) are at the northern end of Daley Rd. The affiliated **Urula College** (Map p346; ☎ 6279 4303) and **John XXIII College** (Map p346; ☎ 6279 4905) lie to the south, opposite Sullivans Creek. Civic is a brisk 15-minute walk across campus.

### CAMPING & CARAVAN PARKS

**Canberra Motor Village** (Map p364; ☎ 6247 5466; canmotorvillage@ozemail.com.au; Kunzea St, O'Connor; camp site \$16-22, caravan site \$30, d \$65-132; ☎ ☎ ☎) Attractively positioned in a peaceful, bush hillside setting 6km northwest of Civic, this place has an abundance of amenities, motel rooms and self-contained cabins in various sizes. Note no pets allowed.

**Canberra Carotel** (Map p364; ☎ 6241 1377; info@carotel.com.au; Federal Hwy, Watson; camp site \$18, caravan site \$24, d \$65-180; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎) This is a large caravan park and motel complex on the northern outskirts of town. The complex looks a little ordinary on its 22 acres with not enough trees, but the reception/shop is friendly and the cabins are good value, especially for larger families and groups.

**Eaglehawk Holiday Park** (Map p344; ☎ 6241 6411; www.eaglehawk.contact.com.au; Federal Hwy, Sutton; camp/caravan site \$18/25, s & d \$80-135, f \$90-145; ☎ ☎) This friendly highwayside complex is only 12km north of the centre, just over the NSW border. It has plenty of sheltered midrange accommodation and recreation facilities and is pet friendly. Meals are available at the pub next door.

### Midrange

The **Canberra visitors centre** (Map p346; ☎ 1300 554 114, 6205 0044; www.visitcanberra.com.au; 330 Northbourne

Ave, Dickson; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) can often provide a midrange or top-end room cheaper than standby rates and the rack rates mentioned here.

**Our pick Blue & White Lodge** (Map p364; ☎ 6248 0498; blueandwhitelodge@bigpond.com; 524 Northbourne Ave, Downer; s \$55-88, d \$90-95, f \$110-130; ☎ ☎) The Grecian pillars and name hint at the friendly Mediterranean reception and squeaky clean accommodation that greets guests of this recommended B&B. The comfortable rooms, some share bathrooms, are neat as a pin and come with a delicious cooked breakfast (or you can elect for a room-only rate). The owners of Blue & White Lodge also manage Canberra Lodge (Map p364; 528 Northbourne Ave, Downer), a similarly styled place, with parking and air-conditioning, where all the rooms are en suite, two doors down. Direct inquiries to Blue & White Lodge where you will also find your breakfast dining room.

**Northbourne Lodge** (Map p364; ☎ 6257 2599; 522 Northbourne Ave, Downer; s/d \$70/90; ☎ ☎) This stylish, adobe-washed B&B provides good-value, accommodation with private bathrooms and a choice of breakfast (\$10) – English, Continental and Asian. The owner has a wealth of ideas for what to do in Canberra.

**Motel Monaro** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 2111; www.bestwestern.com.au/motelmonaro; 27 Dawes St, Kingston; s/d from \$105/116; ☎ ☎ ☎) This well-maintained motel is on a quiet street a short stroll away from the coffee-scented Kingston shopping centre. It is run by the same convivial folk who manage Victor Lodge (opposite) next door. It has a couple of large rooms that are ideal for groups. Book ahead when parliament is sitting.

**Rydges Eagle Hawk Resort** (Map p344; ☎ 1800 651 543, 6241 6033; www.rydges.com/eaglehawk; Federal Hwy, Sutton; s & d from \$100, f \$145; ☎ ☎ ☎) This well-appointed conference facility is just over the border in NSW, about 10km from the city. It boasts an expansive block of bushland, a pool and tennis courts, and welcomes families.

**Tall Trees Motel** (Map p364; ☎ 6247 9200; www.bestwestern.com.au/talltrees; 21 Stephen St, Ainslie; d \$100-125; ☎ ☎) The trees are tall and the quiet, leafy gardens help make this a good choice for light sleepers. The rooms are spacious, have garden outlooks and yet you are still only minutes from the city.

**Olims Hotel Canberra** (Map p346; ☎ 1800 475 337, 6243 0000; www.olimshotel.com; cnr Ainslie & Limestone Aves, Braddon; d \$105-145; ☎ ☎ ☎) This 1927 National Trust heritage-listed building and its later



refurbishments look a little worse for wear on the outside but the well-appointed rooms surround a nice, terraced courtyard garden. There are standard rooms, superior rooms and 1st-floor, self-contained 'loft' rooms with balconies looking over the inner garden. The rooms where smoking is allowed, with their sealed in corridors, are certainly not a suitable option for non-smokers.

**Miranda Lodge** (Map p364; ☎ 6249 8038; www.miranda-lodge.com.au; 534 Northbourne Ave, Downer; s/d \$100/120; P ☼) This motel-style lodge has clean-cut rooms in a variety of sizes and puts a full cooked breakfast under your bleary morning eyes. The owners of Miranda Lodge also run the equally priced Parkview Lodge (Map p364; 526 Northbourne Ave, Downer) nearby; direct inquiries to Miranda Lodge.

**University House** (Map p346; ☎ 6125 5211; www.anu.edu.au/unihouse; 1 Balmain Cres, Acton; s \$75-130, d \$125-180; P) This 1950s-era building, with furniture to match, resides in the bushy grounds of ANU. The spacious rooms can be hired with or without breakfast and come with a small balcony from where you can watch attendees of academic conferences come and go. It also has a pleasant courtyard in which to let your thoughts wander and a good selection of wine in the cellar bottle shop.

## Top End

**Novotel** (Map p346; ☎ 1300 656 565, 6245 5000; www.novotelcanberra.com.au; 65 Northbourne Ave, Civic; s & d \$150-410; P ☼) The 197-room Novotel occupies prime central real estate just a few minutes' stroll from restaurants and shops. The four-star mod-cons include in-room data points, a business centre, spa, gym and a pool. The operators have thought of pretty much everything, down to the daily weather reports posted in the lifts.

**Pacific International Apartments – Capital Tower** (Map p346; ☎ 1800 224 584, 6276 3444; www.pacificinhotels.com; 2 Marcus Clarke St, Civic; apt from \$155; P ☼) Rooms on the southern side of this apartment complex face the soporific waters of Lake Burley Griffin and attract a slightly higher tariff than city-side rooms. The majority of apartments have two or three bedrooms and can fit up to six people. There's no restaurant, but limited room service is available (mains \$10 to \$15).

**Hyatt Hotel Canberra** (Map p346; ☎ 6270 1234; www.canberra.park.hyatt.com; Commonwealth Ave, Yarralumla; r from \$325; P ☼) This beautifully restored,

luxurious, Art-Deco hotel boasts an impressive spa, gym and pool, a cigar bar, restaurant, tea lounge and round-the-clock room service, making it Canberra's only five-star accommodation. Try for a room with a view of the lake, and ask about the various B&B packages.

## EATING

Canberra's dining scene is mainly concentrated in the city centre (Civic), in the trendy enclaves of Manuka and Kingston, and in the northern suburb of Dickson where Asian cuisine reigns supreme. Most of the city's major sights have a decent café or restaurant attached, some with lake views.

### Civic

Within and around Civic you'll find everything from burger joints to no-fuss Italian restaurants and trendy Asian eateries. Fast food is on the menu at the Canberra Centre's **food hall** (Map p346; Bunda St; meals \$6-12; ☼ breakfast, lunch & dinner), including sushi, kebabs, burgers, laksa, gourmet rolls and smoothies.

**la pasa** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 6288; Shop 1 Alinga St; mains \$11-17; ☼ lunch & dinner) This Singaporean beauty woks up superb Malaysian meals including a variety of fiery laksas, chilli prawns, and beef rendang. There are several vegetarian options and good-value lunch boxes for \$7.

**Caffe della Piazza** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 9711; 19 Garema Pl; mains \$14-22; ☼ lunch & dinner) With plenty of outdoor seating, a commendable wine list, and generous serves of traditional pasta this Italian institution attracts a appreciative lunchtime crowd.

**Lemon Grass** (Map p346; ☎ 6247 2779; 65 London Circuit; mains \$14-18; ☼ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) Situated in the delightful Melbourne building, this dependable Thai institution offers a long list of vegetarian, stir-fry, curry and seafood dishes. If you're a fan of king prawns order the *goong gratiam* and pepper with steamed vegetables.

**Asian Café** (Map p346; ☎ 6262 6233; 32 West Row; mains \$9-20; ☼ lunch & dinner) Chinese and Malaysian standards such as roast duck and laksa are professionally dished out in this busy and brightly coloured café. Takeaway is available if you just can't sit still.

**Tosolini's** (Map p346; ☎ 6247 4317; cnr London Circuit & East Row; mains \$15-28; lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) Tosolini's has predominantly rich, meaty meals, such as the venison pie with winter vegetables, though the menu changes with

the seasons and there are several salads and a few vegetarian options available.

### Manuka

Southeast of Capital Hill is the multi-cuisine culture of Manuka shopping centre, an up-market hub for diplomats and other suits. Try French, Spanish, Turkish, Italian, Lebanese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and more, in the local eateries.

**Ruchi** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 7122; Style Arcade, Franklin St; mains \$7-15; ☼ lunch Tue-Fri & Sun, dinner Tue-Sat) Ruchi specialises in South Indian cuisine and has a comprehensive menu of veg and non-veg dishes from Goan vindalooos and Kerala fish curries to lamb Madras. Bring a group of friends and take an inexpensive epicurean excursion of the other Deep South. There's a popular lunch buffet on Sunday (\$16.50).

**My Café** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 6632; Franklin St; mains \$10-20; ☼ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This small licensed café serving bruschettas, bagels and burgers attracts a breakfast crowd keen to bring their office wherever they go. With sunny sidewalk tables it is also popular for lingering lunches and with espresso junkies throughout the day.

**Alanya** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 9678; Style Arcade, Franklin St; mains \$15-25; ☼ lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) This long-standing Turkish restaurant has been feeding its fans for over 20 years with authentic delights. There are plenty of banquet options (including vegetarian) and stand-alone mains like the excellent *hünkâr beğendi* (diced lamb on a bed of eggplant).

**Mecca Bah** (Map p346; ☎ 6260 6700; 25-29 Manuka Tce; mains \$15-20; ☼ lunch & dinner) Satisfy the biggest hunger with the dips and bread, tagines, grills and wood-fired Turkish pizzas of this stylish Middle Eastern restaurant.

**Legends** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 3966; Franklin St; mains \$20-30; ☼ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) This lively Spanish restaurant is upstairs in the Capital Cinema Centre. House specialities include paella (a vegetarian version is available) and *bacalao* (salted cod), and there are lots of delicious tapas (from \$9) to nibble. There's also the odd bit of live flamenco guitar most nights.

### Kingston

Kingston's cafés, bars and restaurants surround the leafy Green Square and continue around the perimeter of the shopping centre.

**Cipriani** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 0777; 27 Kennedy St; mains \$11-28; ☼ lunch & dinner) The casual elegance, at-

tentive service, smooth lines and warm Tuscan tones only hint at the dining delight that is Cipriani. Specialities include homemade sausages, such as the delicious chicken, rocket and ricotta salsicce, and the traditional Italian pork sausage served with a roasted capsicum relish or creamy mashed potato. It also has a mouth-watering range of pizzas and an extensive wine list with quality wines available by the glass.

**Silo** (Map p346; ☎ 6260 6060; 36 Giles St; mains \$14-20; ☼ breakfast & lunch Tue-Sat) This accomplished bakery/café can be standing room only during the breakfast and lunch rushes. Besides a fine range of breads and breakfast standards like eggs Florentine, it offers gourmet pizzas and exquisite flans and tarts.

**First Floor** (Map p346; ☎ 6260 6311; Green Sq; mains \$18-30; ☼ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) Overlooking Green Square is this fine-dining establishment with minimalist décor, where the seasonal Mod Oz menus run the gamut from fish and chips to stir-fries and pasta. The desserts are truly decadent and you can sip wines from around Australia.

**Santa Lucia** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 1813; 21 Kennedy St; mains \$20-25; ☼ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) Canberra's first Italian restaurant is three decades old and still going strong. Generous pasta dishes with rich sauces are delivered to the patent red-and-white-checked tablecloths, and there are kids' meals for \$10 to \$12.

### Dickson

Dickson's eclectic shopping precinct is dominated by an Asian smorgasbord where Chinese, Thai, Laotian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Indian, Turkish and Malaysian restaurants compete with such odd bedfellows as McDonald's and an Irish pub.

**Sfoglia** (Map p364; ☎ 6262 5538; Woolley St; mains \$6-12; ☼ breakfast & lunch) A delightful patisserie and café where you can find a hearty cooked breakfast and strong coffee to kickstart your day or a healthy focaccia to give you a lunchtime boost.

**Âu Lac** (Map p364; ☎ 6262 8922; 39 Woolley St; mains \$9-12; ☼ lunch Tue-Sun, dinner daily) This simple Vietnamese vegetarian restaurant employs soya bean as a culinary chameleon, making it pretend to be a beef curry, fried fish or honey-roast chicken. The meals are tasty and the service is quick, and there's a value lunch box special for \$7.

**Kingsland Vegetarian Restaurant** (Map p364; ☎ 6262 9350; Shop 5, Dickson Plaza; mains \$8-15; ☼ lunch

& dinner Wed-Mon, dinner Sat) Another popular vegetarian restaurant where the Asian dishes make use of soy substitute to look like various meats. It is located off Woolley St.

**Dickson Asian Noodle House** (Map p364; ☎ 6247 6380; 29 Woolley St; mains \$11-14; ☺ lunch & dinner) This perennially popular Laotian and Thai café is usually booked up towards the end of the week, though thankfully there's always take-away. Within minutes of ordering, eat your fill of wok-fried, Hokkien-style or soup-laden noodles. Pick of the menu is the addictive combination laksa.

## Elsewhere

Other recommended eateries:

**Bernadette's Café & Restaurant** (Map p364;

☎ 6248 5018; Wakefield Gardens, Ainslie; mains \$8-17; ☺ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) A good veg option with burgers, pizzas and soups.

**Café in the House** (Map p346; ☎ 6270 8156; Old Parliament House, King George Tce, Parkes; mains \$10-25; ☺ lunch Sun-Mon & dinner Fri) Enjoy white linen service in the delightful surrounds of Old Parliament House (p350).

**Meeting Place** (Map p364; ☎ 6230 2657; Kamberra Wine Company, cnr Northbourne Ave & Flemington Rd, Lyneham; mains \$25-30; ☺ lunch Sun-Sat & dinner Thu-Sat) A delightful lunch spot in the well-tended grounds of the winery.

**Tower Restaurant** (Map p364; ☎ 6248 6162; Telstra Tower, Black Mountain Dr; mains \$30-35; ☺ lunch & dinner) Canberra's only revolving restaurant.

## DRINKING

Pubs and bars are mostly concentrated in Civic, but some good establishments have also set themselves up in the northern suburbs of Dickson and O'Connor, and across the lake in Kingston.

**Wig & Pen** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 0171; cnr Alinga St & West Row, Civic) This little brewery pub has its two-room interior packed out on Friday nights by thirsty office workers who also enjoy the hearty pub meals (\$10 to \$12). It produces several styles of beer, including real English ale.

**Belgian Beer Cafe** (Map p346; ☎ 6260 6511; 29 Jardine St, Kingston) With 33 bottled Belgian beers and five on tap, such as the ever popular Stella Artois, this is the place to quench a thirst and educate a palate.

**Trinity Bar** (Map p364; ☎ 6262 5010; 28 Challis St, Dickson) Sleek, DJ-equipped Trinity has fine vodkas, martinis and cocktails to sample, plus beer pulled from ceiling-hung taps. Look for

the deep-red lighting and the tri-stripe symbol on the wall – the only signs directing strangers to this out-of-the-way haunt.

**Kremlin** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 7779; 61 Northbourne Ave, Civic) This ultra cool but friendly bar soothes the soul with occasional live strings, a breathable atmosphere and subdued lighting.

**All Bar Nun** (Map p364; ☎ 6257 9191; MacPherson St, O'Connor) This popular bar languishing comfortably in suburbia has a diminutive interior tailor-made for crowded carousing, and tables appealingly sprawled all over the sidewalk. It also has a decent selection of snacks and light meals.

**Hippo Bar** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 9090; 17 Garema Pl, Civic) Chilled-out Hippo is indeed hip and appropriately cosy for a lounge-bar. The red poufs are accosted by a young crowd of cocktail slurpers and heavy smokers, who also file in for Wednesday-night jazz.

**King O'Malley's** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 0111; 131 City Walk, Civic) This Irish theme park is notable for its labyrinthine interior and the fact that its name literally takes the piss out of the teetotaler bureaucrat who kept Canberra 'dry' from its foundation until 1928.

For more of the same, head across Northbourne Ave to **PJ O'Reilly's** (Map p346; ☎ 6230 4752; Melbourne Bldg, cnr Alinga St & West Row, Civic), which is endearingly referred to by the locals as Plastic McPaddy's.

The **Durham Castle Arms** (Map p346; ☎ 6295 1769; Green Sq, Kingston) is a cosy village pub wannabe in the middle of café-filled Kingston, but those who prefer Guinness to an espresso don't mind. Next door is **Filthy McFadden's** (Map p346; ☎ 6239 5303; 62 Jardine St, Kingston), another of Canberra's Guinness-drenched drinking dens.

## ENTERTAINMENT

Canberra has always been curiously good at nurturing its talented musicians, and they pop up around town. You'll find entertainment listings in Thursday's *Canberra Times* and in the free monthly street mag *bma*. **Ticketek** (☎ 6219 6666; www.ticketek.com.au; Akuna St, Civic) sells tickets to all major events.

## Casino

At the southern end of City Walk is **Casino Canberra** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 7074; www.casinocanberra.com.au; 21 Binara St, Civic; ☺ noon-6am; [P]) where you can 'play to win', though there's no money-back guarantee if you lose. The only dress requirement is that you look 'neat and tidy'.

## Cinemas

**Electric Shadows** (Map p346; ☎ 6247 5060; City Walk, Civic; adult/child/concession \$15/9/8) A well-established cinema that prefers the artful approach to a blockbuster rampage. Matinee sessions (pre-5pm) cost adults only \$9 and on Wednesday all tickets are \$8. Note that the cinema was planning to move into a new building across City Walk at the time of research.

**Greater Union** (Map p346; ☎ 6247 5522; www.greaterunion.com.au; 6 Mort St, Civic; adult/child \$15/11) This venue screens mainstream releases. Other multiplex cinemas can be found within Canberra's various suburban shopping malls.

## Live Music

Many pubs have free live music. Those belonging to the pro-forma Irish collective usually have bands three or four nights a week (free).

**ANU Union Bar** (Map p346; ☎ 6125 2446; www.anuunion.com.au; Union Court, Acton; admission \$5-15; ☺ gigs usually 8pm) The Uni Bar is the mainstay of Canberra's live-music scene, with the sounds of bands reverberating around its walls up to three times a week during semester. Big touring acts often play in the high-ceilinged Refectory.

**Tilley's Devine Café Gallery** (Map p364; ☎ 6249 1543; cnr Wattle & Brigalow Sts, Lyneham; usually \$20-30) People of all ages breeze in and out of Tilley's cool, smoke-free interior, with its scuffed furniture, dark booths and eclectic menu of local and international musicians and comedians. It also does poetry nights, writers sessions and great cooked breakfasts.

**Toast** (Map p346; ☎ 6230 0003; City Walk, Civic; usually \$5-10) Located upstairs behind (well behind) the Electric Shadows cinema is this gritty little bar which has live music (solo acoustic, bands, CD launches) at week's end. Decked out with pinball games and a pair of pool tables, it attracts a lively young crowd.

**Hippo Bar** (Map p346; ☎ 6257 9090; 17 Garema Pl; usually \$5-10; ☺ gigs from 9pm Wed) This is another good place for emerging live music. You can hear jazz and turntable sounds.

## Nightclubs

**icbm & Meche** (Map p346; ☎ 6248 0102; 50 Northbourne Ave, Civic; Meche Sat, \$10-12; ☺ icbm 7pm-late daily, Meche midnight-3am Wed-Sat) Young drinking crowds attend this clubbing complex, with the music-blasted bar icbm downstairs and the dancehall Meche upstairs. Hosting the odd international

DJ the complex diversifies with Wednesday comedy nights.

**Club Mombasa** (Map p346; ☎ 0419-609 106; www.clubmombasa.com.au; 128 Bunda St, Civic; events \$5-10; ☺ 8pm-late Wed-Sun) The energetic patrons of Club Mombasa spend their evenings counting the beat to African and Latin rhythms, reggae, hip-hop, funk and drum 'n' bass.

## Performing Arts

**Canberra Theatre Centre** (Map p346; ☎ box office 1800 802 025, 6275 2700; www.canberratheatre.org.au; Civic Sq, London Circuit, Civic; ☺ box office 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) There are many dramatic goings-on within this highly cultured centre, from Shakespeare to Circus Oz and indigenous dance troupes. Information and tickets are supplied by Canberra Ticketing, in the adjacent North Building.

**Gorman House Arts Centre** (Map p346; ☎ 6249 7377; Ainslie Ave, Braddon) Gorman House hosts various theatre and dance companies that stage their own self-hatched productions, including the innovative moves of the Australian Choreographic Centre (☎ 6247 3103).

## Spectator Sports

The Canberra Raiders are the home-town rugby league side and during the league season (March to September) they play regularly at **Canberra Stadium** (Map p364; ☎ 6256 6700; www.canberrastadium.com; Battye St, Bruce; [P]). Also laying tackles at Canberra Stadium are the Brumbies rugby union team, who play in the international Super 14 competition (February to May). You can catch the highly rated women's basketball team, the Canberra Capitals, in action (October to February) at **Southern Cross Stadium** (Map p364; ☎ tickets 6253 3066; cnr Cowlshaw St & Athllon Dr, Greenway; [P]), while their compatriots the AIS play at the **AIS Training Hall** (Map p364; ☎ 6214 1201; Leverrier Cres, Bruce; [P]).

## SHOPPING

There are a variety of creative gifts and interesting souvenirs from galleries and shops associated with the major sights. For Aboriginal Art see Gold Creek Village (p365), and for antiques and craft see Bungendore (p365).

**Canberra Centre** (Map p346; ☎ 6247 5611; Bunda St, Civic) The city's biggest shopping centre boasts numerous speciality stores, including fashion boutiques, food emporiums and jewellery shops and several chain stores. The ground-floor information desk can help with



wheelchair and stroller hire. More well-browsed shops line adjacent stretches of the pedestrianised City Walk.

**Craft ACT** (Map p346; ☎ 6262 9333; www.craftact.org.au; 1st fl, North Bldg, Civic Sq, Civic) There are some wonderful exhibitions of contemporary work here, with cutting-edge designs in the form of bags, bowls, pendants and prints.

**Old Bus Depot Markets** (Map p346; ☎ 6292 8391; www.obdm.com.au; Wentworth Ave, Kingston; ☎ 10am-4pm Sun) This popular indoor market specialises in hand-crafted goods and regional edibles, including the output of the Canberra district's 20-plus wineries.

**Gorman House Arts Centre Markets** (Map p346; ☎ 6249 7377; Ainslie Ave, Braddon; ☎ 10am-4pm Sat) Art, craft and bric-a-brac and the odd burst of entertainment liven up the courtyards of this heritage precinct.

**Kamberra Wine Company** (Map p364; ☎ 6262 2333; www.kamberra.com.au; cnr Northbourne Ave & Flemington Rd, Lyneham; ☎ 10am-5pm) A winery and part-time gallery, this complex showcases the district's fine cool-climate wines and has a café and restaurant for further ingestion treats.

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### Air

**Canberra airport** (Map p344; ☎ 6275 2236) is chiefly serviced by **Qantas** (Map p346; ☎ 13 13 13, TTY 1800 652 660; www.qantas.com.au; Jolimont Centre, Northbourne Ave, Civic) and **Virgin Blue** (☎ 13 67 89; www.virginblue.com.au) with (usually) direct flights to Adelaide (one way, 1½ hours), Brisbane (one way, 1½ hours), Sydney (one way, 45 minutes) and Melbourne (from \$180 one way, one hour).

**Brindabella Airlines** (☎ 1300 668 824; www.brindabellaairlines.com.au) flies between Canberra, Albury-Wodonga and Newcastle.

### Bus

The **Interstate Bus Terminal** (Map p346; Northbourne Ave, Civic) is at the Jolimont Centre, which has lockers, showers, internet access and free phone lines to the visitors centre and budget accommodation. In the centre, facing Northbourne Ave, is **Guidepost Travel** (☎ 6249 6006; 65 Northbourne Ave, Civic), who handles **CountryLink** (www.countrylink.info) train/coach tickets and books seats on most bus services.

**Greyhound Australia** (☎ 13 14 99; www.greyhound.com.au; Jolimont Centre office ☎ 6am-9.30pm) has frequent services to Sydney (adult/concession \$36/26, four to five hours) and also runs to/from Adelaide (\$135/110, 18 hours) and Mel-

bourne (\$80/65, nine hours). In winter there are services to Cooma, Jindabyne and Thredbo.

**Murrays** (☎ 13 22 51; www.murrays.com.au; ☎ Jolimont Centre counter 7am-7pm) has daily express services running to Sydney (adult/child \$36/29, 3¼ hours) and also runs to Batemans Bay (\$24/12, 2½ hours), Narooma (\$36/18, 4½ hours) and Wollongong (\$31/19, 3½ hours). In winter Murrays run services to Thredbo and Perisher Blue.

**Transborder** (☎ 6241 0033; www.transborder.com.au) runs daily to Yass (adult/child \$14/7, 50 minutes). Its 'Alpinexpress' service runs to Thredbo (\$64/32, three hours) via Jindabyne (\$45/36, 2½ hours) daily.

### Car & Motorcycle

The Hume Hwy links Sydney and Melbourne, passing about 50km north of Canberra. The Federal Hwy runs north to connect with the Hume near Goulburn (for Sydney) and the Barton Hwy meets the Hume near Yass (for Melbourne). To the south, the Monaro Hwy connects Canberra with Cooma.

Rental car prices start at around \$45 a day. Major companies with Canberra city offices (and desks at the airport):

**Avis** (Map p346; ☎ 13 63 33, 6249 6088; 17 Lonsdale St, Braddon)

**Budget** (Map p346; ☎ 1300 362 848, 6257 2200; Rydges Lakeside Hotel, 1 London Circuit, Civic)

**Hertz** (Map p346; ☎ 13 30 39, 6257 4877; 32 Mort St, Braddon)

**Thrifty** (Map p346; ☎ 13 61 39, 6247 7422; 29 Lonsdale St, Braddon)

Another option is **Rumbles** (Map p364; ☎ 6280 7444; 11 Paragon Mall, Gladstone St, Fishwick).

### Train

**Kingston train station** (Map p346; Wentworth Ave) is the city's rail terminus. You can book trains and connecting buses inside the station at the **CountryLink travel centre** (☎ 13 22 32, 6295 1198; ☎ 6am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-5.30pm Sun) and at **Guidepost Travel** (Map p346; ☎ 6249 6006; 65 Northbourne Ave, Civic).

CountryLink trains run to/from Sydney (adult/child \$54/27, four hours, three daily). There's no direct train to Melbourne, but a CountryLink coach to Cootamundra links with the train to Melbourne (\$102/51, nine hours, one daily); the service leaves Jolimont at 10am. A daily **VLine** (☎ 13 61 96; www.vline.com.au) Canberra Link service involves a train

between Melbourne and Albury-Wodonga, then a connecting bus to Canberra (\$63/41, 8½ hours, one daily). A longer but more scenic bus/train service to Melbourne is the **V/Line Capital Link** (\$63/41, 10½ hours) running every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday via Cooma and the East Gippsland forests to Sale, where you board the Melbourne-bound train. Return trips are run on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

## GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

Canberra airport is 8km southeast of the city. Taxi fares to the city average \$20. **Deane's Buses** (☎ 6299 3722) operates the **AirLiner bus** (\$7, 20 minutes, 11 times daily weekdays), which runs between the airport and the Civic bus interchange (bay 6).

### Bus

Canberra's public transport provider is the **ACT Internal Omnibus Network** (Action; ☎ 13 17 10, 6207 7611; www.action.act.gov.au). The main Civic bus interchange is along Alinga St, East Row and Mort St in Civic. Visit the **information kiosk** (Map p346; East Row, Civic; ☎ 7.15am-5pm Mon-Fri) for free route maps and timetables.

You can purchase single-trip tickets (adult/concession \$3/1.50), but a better bet for most visitors is a daily ticket (adult/concession \$6.60/3.30). Tickets can be purchased in advance from Action agents (including the visitors centre and some newsagents), or buy them direct from the driver.

### Car & Motorcycle

Canberra's road system is as circuitous as a politician's answer to a straight question. That said, the wide and relatively uncluttered main roads make driving easy, even at so-called 'peak-hour' times. A map is essential.

### Taxi

Call **Canberra Cabs** (☎ 13 22 27). One of the main taxi ranks is on Bunda St, outside the cinemas.

## AROUND CANBERRA

For information and maps on attractions around Canberra, including the unspoiled bushland just outside the outer urban limits, head to the visitors centre (p349).

## SOUTH & WEST OF THE CITY – THE WILD SIDE

### Murrumbidgee River Corridor

About 66km of the **Murrumbidgee River** flows through the ACT, and along with major tributaries of the **Molonglo** and **Cotter Rivers**, it provides great riverside picnic locations and swimming spots. Pick up a map and brochure at the visitors centre and explore the waters of **Uriarra Crossing**, 24km northwest of the city, on the Murrumbidgee near its meeting with the Molonglo River; **Casuarina Sands**, 19km west of the city at the meeting of the Cotter and Murrumbidgee Rivers; **Kambah Pool Reserve**, another 14km upstream on the Murrumbidgee; **Cotter Dam**, 23km west of the city on the Cotter River and with a camping ground; **Pine Island** and **Point Hut Crossing**, upstream of Kambah Pool Reserve on the Murrumbidgee; and **Gibraltar Falls**, roughly 45km southwest of the city.

On the banks of the Murrumbidgee, 20km south of Canberra, is the beautiful **Lanyon Homestead** (☎ 6237 5136; Tharwa Dr; adult/concession/family \$7/5/15; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun). Also on-site but in a separate building is the **Nolan Gallery** (☎ 6235 5688; adult/concession/family \$3/2/6; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun), containing paintings by celebrated Australian artist Sidney Nolan, including his famous Ned Kelly art. You can buy a **combined ticket** (adult/concession/family \$9/7/20) to both homestead and gallery.

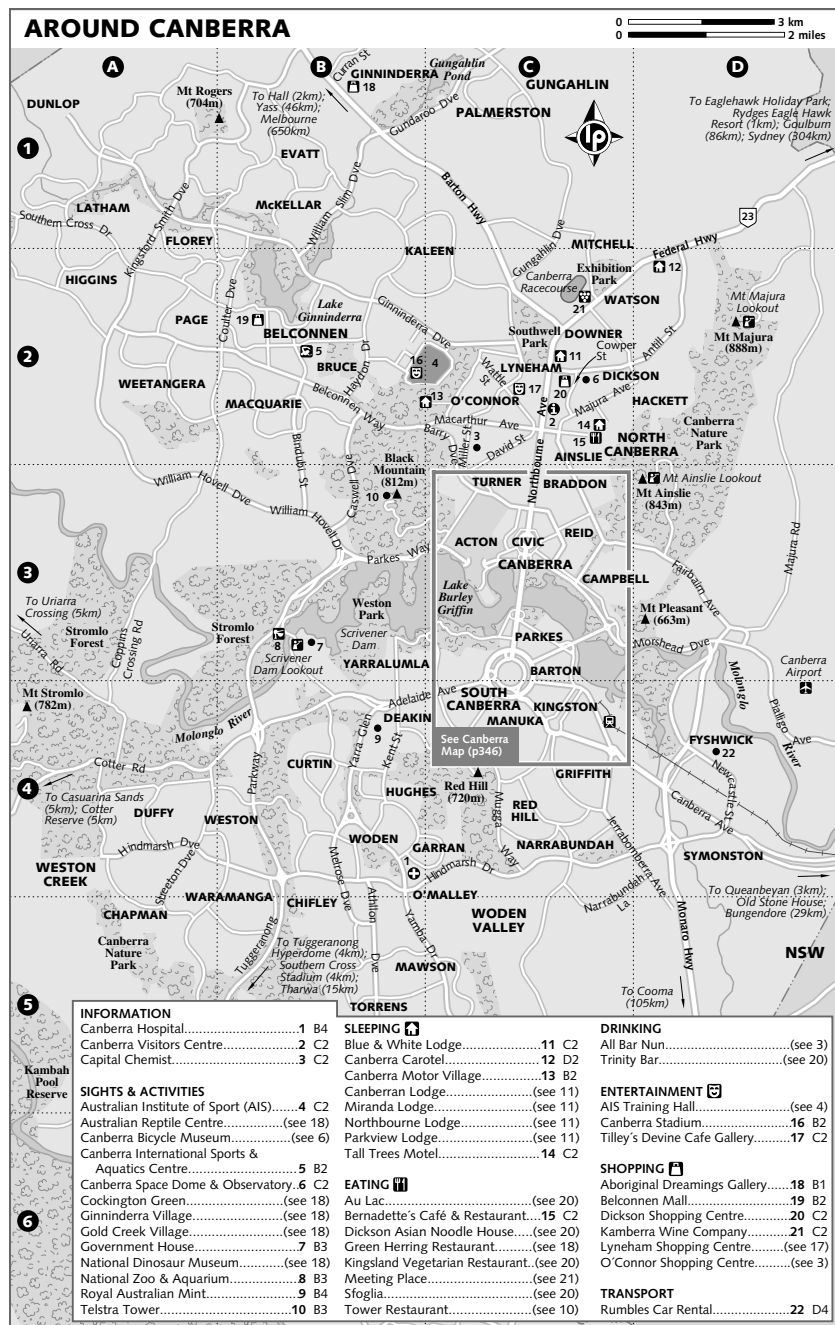
Near Tharwa is **Cuppacumbalong** (☎ 6237 5116; Naas Rd; ☎ 11am-5pm Wed-Sun & public holidays), a 1922 homestead and heritage garden reincarnated as a quality Australian craftware studio and gallery.

### Space Observatories

The ANU's **Mt Stromlo Observatory** (☎ 6201 7800; www.mso.anu.edu.au; Mt Stromlo Rd, Stromlo; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun) was virtually destroyed by the bushfires of January 2003. All but one of the optical telescopes were completely destroyed and the burnt-out domes make for a rather spooky, sci-fi attraction. Huge optical telescopes are dinosaurs in the space exploration field so they won't be replaced. There's an interesting education centre, a meteorite you can stick a magnet on and a breezy café.

The **Canberra Space Centre** (☎ 6201 7880; www.cdsc.nasa.gov; off Paddy's River Rd; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) resides in grounds of the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex, 40km southwest of the city. Pride of place goes to Deep





Space Station 43, a 70m-diameter dish that has communicated with the likes of Voyager 1 and 2, Galileo and various Mars probes. There are displays of spacecraft and deep-space tracking technology, plus a piece of lunar basalt scooped up by Apollo XI in 1969. A theatre continuously screens short films on space exploration and the **Moon Rock Café** (☎ 6281 2190) serves drinks and lunches.

### Tidbinbilla & Namadgi

**Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve** (☎ 6205 1233; www.environment.act.gov.au; off Paddy's River Rd), is just 45km southwest of the city, and is threaded with bushwalking tracks. There are kangaroos and emus and this is a great spot to view platypus and lyrebirds at dusk. Call for information on ranger-guided activities on weekends and school holidays.

**Corin Forest** (☎ 6235 7333; www.corin.com.au; Corin Rd), roughly 50km southwest of the city is a mountain recreation facility surrounded by Tidbinbilla Reserve. There's a 1.2km bobsled track and a flying fox, both open year-round; a water-slide in summer; and a 'snowplay' area in winter. See the website for prices and special packages.

**Namadgi National Park** (www.environment.act.gov.au) includes eight peaks higher than 1700m and offers excellent opportunities for bushwalking, mountain biking, fishing, horseriding and viewing Aboriginal rock art. For more information, visit the **Namadgi Visitor Centre** (☎ 6207 2900; Naas Rd, Tharwa; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4.30pm Sat & Sun), 2km south of the Tharwa township. There is **camping** (unpowered sites per person \$3-5) available at Honeysuckle Creek, Mt Clear and Orroral River; bookings must be made through the Namadgi Visitor Centre.

### NORTH & EAST OF THE CITY

#### Gold Creek Village

The attractions at **Gold Creek Village** (☎ 6253 9780; Gold Creek Rd, Barton Hwy, Nicholls; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) are a combination of colonial kitsch and genuinely interesting exhibits that will keep the kids occupied.

The forlorn, touristy **Ginninderra Village** (admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) was sporting a few 'For

Lease' signs when we visited. Kids will find the big bones at the **National Dinosaur Museum** (☎ 6230 2655; www.nationaldinosaurmuseum.com.au; adult/child/family \$9.50/6.50/30; ☎ 10am-5pm) more their style.

The **Australian Reptile Centre** (☎ 6253 8533; adult/child/concession/family \$7.50/5/6/26; ☎ 10am-5pm) is a fascinating showcase of reptilian life. Behind glass are tree skinks and scrub pythons, plus the world's four deadliest land snakes. Encourage the kids to be cuddled by one of their harmless brethren – a slippery python.

**Cockington Green** (☎ 6230 2273; www.cockington-green.com.au; off Paddy's River Rd), is just 45km southwest of the city, and is threaded with bushwalking tracks. There are kangaroos and emus and this is a great spot to view platypus and lyrebirds at dusk. Call for information on ranger-guided activities on weekends and school holidays.

Nearby is the **Aboriginal Dreamings Gallery** (Map p364; ☎ 6230 2922; 19 O'Hanlon Pl, Nicholls) with an excellent selection of Aboriginal artworks that includes didgeridoos and bark paintings, with certificates of authenticity provided where possible.

### Queanbeyan & Bungendore

The NSW towns of Queanbeyan and Bungendore lie just over the border and are intrinsically linked with the national capital. Queanbeyan is a thriving country town that provides inexpensive motel accommodation only 12km from the centre of Canberra. Try the **Mid City Motor Inn** (☎ 02-6297 7366; 215 Crawford St, Queanbeyan; s/d \$64/79; ☎) if you run out of options in Canberra.

Bungendore is a very attractive village 35km east of Canberra, which bustles on weekends but sleeps during the week. There are galleries and antique stores aplenty to keep the cardigan crowd amused and bemused, but the highlight would have to be the **Bungendore Wood Works Gallery** (☎ 02-6238 1682; cnr Malbon & Ellendon Sts, Bungendore; s/d \$64/79; ☎). As well as showcasing superb work crafted from Australian timber there are changing exhibits of contemporary Australian artists.

The best place to stay in the region is the **Old Stone House** (☎ 6238 1888; stnhsebb@tpg.com.au; 41 Molonglo St, Bungendore; s/d \$130/190; ☎) a charismatic 1867 granite-block house offering B&B in four antique-furnished rooms.

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