

The Riverina



This green, endlessly rolling country with some of the state's best farming and grazing areas is called the Riverina because the mighty Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers are its lifeblood. Irrigation schemes along these important waterways have allowed crops such as rice, lettuce and grapes to flourish in several centres, while the small towns of the Riverina are welcoming oases, especially for visitors who are serious about food and wine.

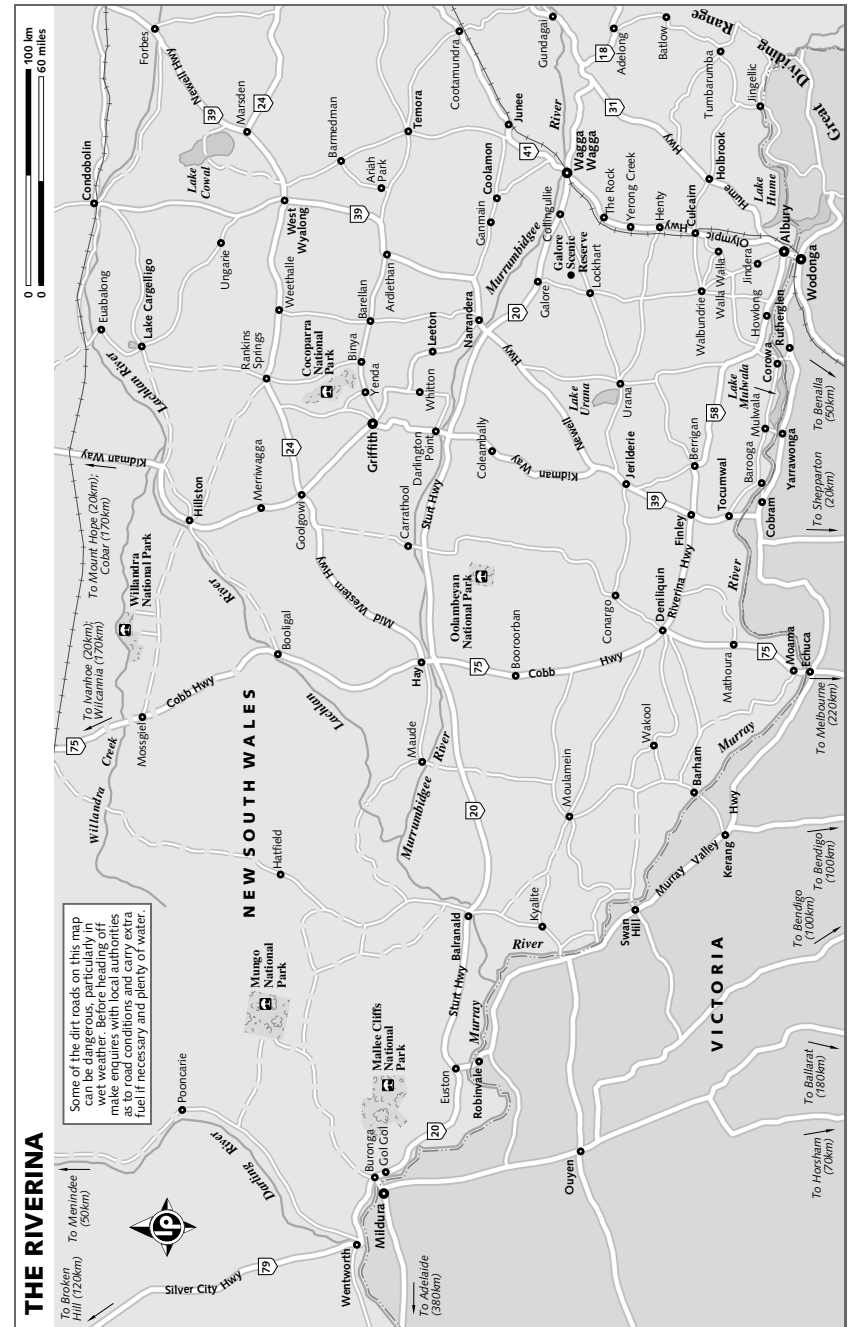
Before the Europeans arrived, the rivers of the region provided an idyllic home for the Aborigines, and the area around Deniliquin was probably the most densely populated part of the continent. But John Oxley, the first European to visit the area, wasn't impressed by the arid plains carved by the waterways as they changed course over the millennia, saying, 'There is a uniformity in the barren desolation of this country which wearies one more than I am able to express'.

A century later the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA) had turned those dry flatlands into fertile farmland and graziers had established sheep stations on the plains. These days you'll find thriving townships, looking their best in the balmy climate. There's a grand sense of history everywhere. And as well as the farms and stations, there's small industries preparing all sorts of gourmet delights to send to the cities.

It's a popular region for holidays, especially for water sports on the rivers. And away from the rivers, it's all low key, where people seem to find time to chat to you – all part of the Riverina's attraction.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Feast on glorious Italian fare in **Griffith** (p286)
- Test the chocolate and liquorice at the Liquorice Factory in **Junee** (p280)
- Embrace the sights and smells of the **live-stock sales market** (p277) in Wagga Wagga
- Spin down the **orange-red sand dunes** (p293) near Wentworth
- Watch the kangaroos from the beautifully restored homestead at **Willandra National Park** (p287)
- Glow in the colourful reflections at the **National Glass Art Collection** (p277) in Wagga Wagga
- Catch yabbies before setting up the barbecue in **Corowa** (p289)
- Laze the days away on a magnificent sandy river-beach at **Deniliquin** (p291)



MURRUMBIDGEE RIVER

Murrumbidgee is an Aboriginal word for 'big river', and true to its name the Murrumbidgee flows 1578km from the Snowy Mountains to its confluence with the Murray River. The Murrumbidgee is the most important source of irrigation water for the lush Riverina region.

WAGGA WAGGA

☎ 02 / pop 58,000

'Wagga' is the state's largest inland city, a pretty city with fine buildings, wide tree-lined streets and lovely riverside gardens. Though it sprawls across a large area, it has the feel of a relaxed country town, with the nearby Charles

Sturt University and some interesting cultural attractions adding diversity.

The name means 'place of many crows' in the language of the local Wiradjuri people, but an alternate meaning is 'dancing like a drunken man'.

Orientation & Information

The long main street, Baylis St, which runs north from the train station, becomes Fitzmaurice St at its northern end. The **visitors centre** (☎ 1300 100 122; www.tourismwagawagga.com.au; Tarcutta St; ☎ 9am-5pm) is close to the river.

There's internet access at **Civic Video** (☎ 6921 8866; 21 Forsyth St; per hr \$5; ☎ 10am-10pm) and **Scribbles Internet Café** (☎ 6921 8860; 22 Fitzmaurice St; per hr \$4; see p278).

WAGGA WAGGA

0 0.5 miles 1 km

INFORMATION	
Civic Video.....	1 D3
Library.....	(see 4)
Post Office.....	2 D3
Scribbles Internet Café.....	(see 18)
Visitors Centre.....	3 D3

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	
Civic Centre.....	4 D3
Courthouse.....	5 C3
Memorial Gardens.....	6 C3
Oasis Regional Aquatic Centre.....	7 D4
Wagga Wagga Art Gallery.....	(see 4)

SLEEPING	
Centralpoint Motel.....	8 D3
Club Motel.....	9 D3
Country Comfort.....	10 D3
Lawson Motor Inn.....	11 D3
Manor.....	12 C3
Romano's Hotel.....	13 C3
Wagga Wagga Beach Caravan Park.....	14 D2

EATING	
Café Lulaba.....	15 C4
Indian Tavern Tandoori.....	16 C3
Nabiha's Kitchen.....	17 D3
Scribbles Internet Café.....	18 D3
Sugars.....	19 D3
Three Chefs.....	20 D4

DRINKING	
Duke of Kent Hotel.....	21 C2
Home Tavern Hotel.....	22 C2
Tourist Hotel.....	23 C2

ENTERTAINMENT	
Civic Theatre.....	(see 4)
Forum Cinemas.....	24 C3

TRANSPORT	
Avis.....	25 D4

Sights & Activities

The Civic Centre houses the **Wagga Wagga Art Gallery** (☎ 6926 9660; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, noon-4pm Sun), home to the wonderful **National Art Glass Collection**. The Glass Collection provides an overview of the history and development of the studio glass movement in Australia from the 1970s. The gallery space is a superb configuration of water, light and glass, and the permanent exhibition is one of diverse colour and beauty.

To check out the town, make use of Wagga's bikeways, flat paths that completely circle the city. The **Oasis Regional Aquatic Centre** (☎ 6937 3737; www.wagga.nsw.gov.au/oasis/; Morgan St; adult/child \$5/\$30; ☎ 6.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-6pm Sat & Sun) has several pools and includes a wave ball with mats to ride the wave, an excellent gym and a fun free playground out the front.

The **Botanic Gardens** (Macleay St; ☎ sunrise-sunset) has a small **zoo**, geese and peacocks that roam free, and a free-flight aviary containing some colourful native birds. The entrance is just before the archway telling you you're entering Lord Baden Powell Drive, which itself leads to a good lookout and the scenic **Captain Cook Drive**.

Wagga is a major centre for **livestock sales** (Boman industrial area) and you can see the farmers (and animals) in action every week. Cattle are sold on Monday in an amphitheatre-style ring, while sheep are sold outdoors by the thousands on Thursday. The smells and sounds are exhilarating.

The **Museum of the Riverina** (☎ 6925 2934; Baden Powell Dr; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, noon-4pm Sun) operates from both the Civic Centre and the Botanic Gardens; the latter site focuses on Wagga's people, places and events. The section on the Wiradjuri people is particularly good, but best is the Sporting Hall of Fame. Countless sports stars grew up in the area, from AFL luminary Wayne Carey to test cricketer Mark Taylor.

The **Wiradjuri Walking Track** is a 30km circuit based from the visitors centre (get your map there) that includes some good lookouts and places of Aboriginal significance. There's another 10km loop past the **Wollundry Lagoon**. From the **beach** near Cabarita Park you can swim and fish, and ponder the famous 'Five O'Clock Wave' (ask a local for an explanation).

The **Wagga Wagga Winery** (☎ 6922 1221; Gundagai Rd; ☎ 11am-10pm Wed-Sun) has delicious barbecue

meals (from \$17). Charles Sturt University has an award-winning **winery** (☎ 6933 2435; ☎ 11am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun), reached through the Agriculture Research Unit, about 3km north of Wagga, off Olympic Hwy.

Rev-arena Go Karts (☎ 6921 9544; www.revarena.com.au; 28 Nagle St; per 15 laps \$19; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat, to 6pm Sun) offers a lot of action and fun, helmets, kiosk, and many packages.

Festivals & Events

The **Wagga Wagga Jazz Festival** (www.waggajazz.org.au), held each September, hosts international and national musicians who play in a variety of locations. The festival is well regarded, and prices for single sessions are reasonable.

Wagga Gold Cup Festival (www.visitwagga.com.au) in May is the biggest and best race meeting in the Riverina, held over two days, with bands, fashions and prize money to attract the best horses.

Sleeping

BUDGET

Wagga Wagga Beach Caravan Park (☎ 6931 0603; www.wwbcp.com.au; 2 Johnston St; camp site per adult \$19, cabin std/deluxe \$55/75; ☎ P) At the bend of the river where the water spreads wide, the banks make a swimming beach, there's stacks of cabins, and you can see the grand old buildings of the town centre.

Romano's Hotel (☎ 6921 2013; cnr Fitzmaurice & Sturt Sts; s/d \$38/50) This is an airy old pub with quaint rooms, grand beds and bleak bathrooms – ask for a room on the quieter 2nd floor.

Club Motel (☎ 6921 6966; theclub1@tpg.com.au; 73 Morgan St; s/d \$65/85; ☎ P) This is perfect if you want to walk to everything. The rooms are spacious enough and very clean.

MIDRANGE

There are many motels in town, especially along Tarcutta St.

Manor (☎ 6921 5962; 38 Morrow St; B&B s/d \$70/98, with bathroom \$95/110, suite \$170; ☎ P) A charming well-restored guesthouse, the Manor is furnished with antiques like four-poster beds and leather-lined desks. Take your breakfast onto the balcony to look over the Memorial Gardens. Equally elegant is the Manor Restaurant (mains \$20-32; open for dinner Monday to Saturday) where the favourite dish is chicken with garlic and prawns.

Centralpoint Motel (☎ 6921 7272; 164-6 Tarcutta St; s/d \$85/108; ☎ P) This motel uses 'allergy-

conscious' cleaning products and all rooms, including studio and one-bedroom, are self-contained. Ask about weekly and family rates.

Country Comfort (☎ 6921 6444; www.countrycomforthotels.com; cnr Morgan & Tarcutta Sts; d from \$120; ☎ P 📺) This sprawling place is huge, with facilities for families and long-stay guests. It's set in pretty gardens and offers many self-contained units.

Lawson Motor Inn (☎ 6921 2200; www.thelawson.com.au; 117 Tarcutta St; std/garden/river d \$125/145/165; ☎ P 📺) Right on the Murrumbidgee, the Lawson is elegant. From it, you can walk straight onto the riverbank walking tracks.

Eating

Nabiha's Kitchen (☎ 6921 7813; Neslo Arcade, Baylis St; mains \$4-9; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) A small Lebanese takeaway (with tables) where everything is cooked in front of you. The menu includes Indian and vegetarian options, home-grown vegetables and free-range eggs.

Sugars (☎ 6921 7710; 54 Forsyth St; mains \$6-11; ☎ 7.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-4pm Sat & Sun) For a delicious breakfast, this sunny spot is perfect. There are wraps and light meals throughout the day.

Scribbles Internet Café (☎ 6921 8860; 22 Fitzmaurice St; mains \$8-15; ☎ breakfast & lunch daily, dinner Thu-Sat) Shabby but fun; it has paper tablecloths for doodling and a pile of favourite board games for you (or your children).

Café Lulaba (☎ 6931 8903; 10 Best St; mains \$11-13; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Tue-Fri, to 4pm Sat) It's known for its dhal curry, but how could you go past the quiche? It's a cheery spot with a large zebra watching over you.

Indian Tavern Tandoori (☎ 6921 3121; 81 Peter St; dishes \$11-19; ☎ dinner) Locals who love a vindaloo support this multi-award-winning eatery which also serves a range of dishes from the tandoori oven.

Magpies Nest Restaurant (☎ 6933 1523; cnr Old Narrandera & Pine Gully Rds; dishes \$15-27; ☎ lunch & dinner Wed-Sun) This is housed in restored stone stables, with sweeping views of the town. The focus is on local produce; vegetables come straight from the garden!

Three Chefs (☎ 6921 5897; 70 Morgan St; mains \$28-35; ☎ breakfast daily, lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) A white-tablecloth fine-dining place which has kept a warm and comfortable atmosphere. The sweet suckling pork with caramelised shallot tart is a taste treat.

Drinking

This is a university town of sorts, and the pubs can get really packed.

Tourist Hotel (☎ 6921 2264; 91 Fitzmaurice St) The Tourist is a glass-fronted old place which has regular live music and a relaxed atmosphere. You will find plenty of locals here, despite its name.

Home Tavern Hotel (☎ 6921 3117; 142 Fitzmaurice St) This low, basic old pub is more of a pool hall. But it's a popular spot, and there are nightly pool competitions where backpackers are always ready to throw out a challenge.

Crow Bar (☎ 6933 2040; Charles Sturt University) It has cheap drinks and a line-up of local bands; visitors are welcome – get a student to sign you in. You'll be mixing with a spunky 18- to 28-year-old group from all over the world.

Duke of Kent Hotel (☎ 6921 3231; Fitzmaurice St) Pretty in pink and blue tiles, the Duke is popular; rowdy but fun.

Entertainment

Wagga Wagga often has a number of arts events going on at any one time; they just aren't highly publicised.

Civic Theatre (☎ 6926 9680; ☎ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 12.30pm Sat) The Civic has a booking office, not only for its own productions but for much of the locally created entertainment, from youth theatre to performances by the Riverina Conservatorium.

Forum Cinemas (☎ 6921 6863; 77 Trail St) Six huge screens show both the latest blockbusters and arthouse flicks.

Getting There & Away

QantasLink (☎ 13 13 13; www.qantaslink.com.au) flies daily to Sydney and **Regional Express** (Rex; ☎ 13 17 13; www.regionalexpress.com.au) flies several times daily to Melbourne and Sydney.

CountryLink (☎ 13 22 42; www.countrylink.com.au) buses leave from **Wagga train station** (☎ 13 22 32, 6939 5488), where you can make bookings. The Melbourne/Sydney XPT service stops at Wagga twice daily. The service costs \$68 to both Sydney and Melbourne. **Greyhound** (☎ 13 1499; www.greyhound.com.au) buses runs daily from Sydney (\$61; eight hours) to Melbourne (\$63; 6½ hours) and another to Adelaide (\$131; 16 hours).

Avis (☎ 6921 9977) car rentals is near the train station at the corner of Edward and Fitzharding Sts.

AROUND WAGGA WAGGA The Rock & Around

On the Olympic Way about 25km southwest of Wagga, The Rock is a small town near a large craggy hill rising out of the flat plain. The town was called Hanging Rock until the boulder balanced on top of the hill fell off late in the 19th century.

Surrounding the hill is the **Rock Nature Reserve**; there's a 3km walking track to the summit, from which you can see Mount Kosciuszko and the Victorian Alps on a clear day. Near the top, the going is steep and you have to be careful of falling rocks.

Galore Scenic Reserve

Henry Osborne (owner of the first station in the region) walked from Wollongong to Adelaide in 1840 and on the way he climbed this sudden hill (it rises 215m from an almost flat plain), exclaiming at the top, 'There's land, and galore'. Now a scenic reserve, Galore Hill is worth a visit for its bush, the plantings near the base of the hill, and the 360-degree views from the platform at the top. You can't camp here.

Galore Hill is 14km south of the Sturt Hwy – turn off about 60km west of Wagga Wagga. It's also accessible from **Lockhart**, a little town known for its beautiful late-19th-century verandas – both sides of the main street, are lined with them.

Culcairn

☎ 02 / pop 1400

The train from Sydney finished at Culcairn back in 1880, so people stayed there overnight then caught the bus to Melbourne. The town's main feature, the **Culcairn Hotel** (1891), still shows how significant it was. It's a majestic

hotel, the largest between the two cities until the 1930s, with a beer garden that deserves a more lavish name – it has a fountain!

The old stationmaster's residence and half the main street are classified by the National Trust.

Morgan's Lookout is a low hill with a cluster of huge boulders on top. Allegedly this was Mad Dog's lookout where he watched for approaching victims and police (see below). You can climb up for great views, and there are gas barbecues. The lookout is about 18km southwest of Culcairn on the sealed road to Walla Walla. While you're out that way, stop to see the old wagon in a glass case on the side of the road in Walla Walla. It tells of the German immigrants' journey from South Australia to settle in the area.

Henty

☎ 02 / pop 1700

Henty is 'Home of the Header' because, in 1913, local farmer Headlie Taylor invented the header harvester, which revolutionised grain harvesting around the world. There's a display commemorating the invention in **Henty Memorial Park**.

The **Henty Machinery Field Days** (www.hmfed.com) are held in the third week in September. About 50,000 people turn up to check out the best in leading-edge farm equipment in Australia.

JUNEE

☎ 02 / pop 5890

Once known as the 'Rail Centre of the South', Junee is a small, friendly country town with an extraordinary number of impressive buildings. Get some tourist information and a map from the **shire offices** (☎ 6924 8100; Belmore St) opposite the police station.

MORGAN COUNTRY

The area known as Morgan Country is a rough circle of pretty country containing some interesting little towns, including Henty, Culcairn and Jindera.

This was once the stamping-ground of Dan 'Mad Dog' Morgan, allegedly the most brutal and callous bushranger in Australia's history. Unlike Ned Kelly, Morgan was a bushranger no-one respected. He began his career in Victoria in the 1850s but was captured and spent six years on a prison hulk in Port Phillip Bay. On receiving parole he escaped and moved into NSW, where for two years he terrorised this small area. Declared an outlaw, he fled to Victoria (where he was still wanted) in 1865, resolving to 'take the flashness out of the Victorian people and police'. With a £1000 bounty on his head he didn't get very far. At Peechelba station, just south of the Murray River, he was shot dead. His head was cut off and it's said that his scrotum became a tobacco pouch.

Sights & Activities

MONTE CRISTO

Built in 1884, the mansion of **Monte Cristo** (☎ 6924 1637; www.montecristo.com.au; Monte Cristo Rd; adult/child/family \$10/5/2.50; ☎ 10am-4pm) was the home of Christopher Crawley, a shrewd landowner who predicted or, rather, manipulated the railway's arrival (via his land) in Junee and the subsequent boom in land prices.

Monte Cristo homestead has been faithfully decorated in high Victorian style, and it's full of superb antiques that have been collected by the owners during their 30-year restoration of the property. It had nearly been destroyed by weather, and vandals who weren't deterred by the house's reputation for supernatural goings-on.

The admission price includes an informative guided tour. You can get to Monte Cristo from John Potts Dr.

RAILWAY ROUNDHOUSE

The only surviving, working roundhouse in Australia, the **Junee Roundhouse** (☎ 6924 2909; Harold St; adult/child/family \$6/4/16; ☎ 9.30am-4.30pm, closed Mon & Fri) was built in 1947. Back then, its 30m turntable was the largest in the southern hemisphere. Railway enthusiasts should visit the **Roundhouse Museum** in the same complex. As well as the large display about the history of rail in Australia, and an impressively large model-train set, there's also an interesting general transport display.

OLD BUILDINGS

If you like pubs, you'll lament the closing of many of Junee's watering holes. Some magnificent old pubs with massive verandas dripping with iron lace now stand empty.

The 1915 **Commercial Hotel** (cnr Lorne & Waratah Sts) still has a busy bar crowded with after-work drinkers. The **Loftus** (☎ 6924 1511; 6 Humphreys St) was the town's grandest hotel, with a frontage running for an entire block. It was sold in late 1999 for only \$32,000!

Across the tracks, the **Junee Hotel** (☎ 6924 1124; Seignior St) was built by Christopher Crawley in 1876. The pub hasn't had a lot done to it over the years, but that means the original fittings are still intact.

The station's **Railway Refreshment Room** (Lorne St; sandwiches from \$4) is a glorious place with huge mirrors and soaring arched ceilings. Apart from admiring your surroundings you can get drinks and a range of sandwiches, cakes and snacks.

LIQUORICE FACTORY

Everyone loves watching **Green Grove Organics** (☎ 6924 3574; www.greengroveorganics.com; 8-18 Lord St; adult/child \$4/2.50; ☎ 10am-4pm) make liquorice and chocolate in the old Junee Flour Mill (1935). In fact it won the Best Tourist Attraction 2006. There's a great gift shop with local arts and crafts, snacks and lunches (\$9.50), and tours run every hour from 10.30am to 2.30pm.

Sleeping & Eating

Junee Caravan Park (☎ 6924 1316; Broadway St; camp site per adult \$22, cabin std/deluxe \$65/85) This pretty caravan park by the lake won the inland tourism award 2006 for its attractive, spacious amenities such as pool, barbecue and playground.

Loftus B&B (☎ 6924 1511; 6 Humphreys St; B&B s/d \$60/90, d with bathroom \$105) A 100-year-old pub located in the centre of town, complete with sweeping staircases and an endless balcony. Downstairs is Betty & Muriel's (☎ 6924 2555; mains \$20 to \$31; open 10am to 10pm Tuesday to Saturday) where you dine with Hollywood stars. Try, if you dare, a Pamela Anderson (two half chicken breasts stuffed with smoked salmon and brie).

Getting There & Away

Junee Buses (☎ 6924 2244), on Main St near the railway level crossing, runs weekday services to Wagga Wagga.

CountryLink (☎ 13 22 42) XPT trains stop at Junee on the main Sydney (\$64; six hours) and Melbourne (\$68; 5½ hours) run twice daily.

COOTAMUNDRA

☎ 02 / pop 7600

Cootamundra, founded around 1860, is a prosperous service centre for surrounding farmlands and an important railway junction. Best known for being the birthplace of cricket great Don Bradman, the town's neat grid of streets contains many fine examples of Federation-style houses and a few earlier Victorian gems. Cootamundra is in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range.

Orientation & Information

Parker St is the main shopping street, and its intersection with Wallendoon St, where you'll find the impressive post office, town hall and several banks, is the centre of town. At the train station on Hovell St the **visitors centre** (☎ 6942 4212, 1800 350 203; www.cootamundra.com; ☎ 9.30am-5pm) can tell you about the host of festivals through-

out the year, or look at the calendar on the website. There's also a self-drive map of the highlights, and snacks available (from \$3).

Sights & Activities

Stand in the old weatherboard hospital, now a **museum** (☎ 6940 2100; 89 Adams St; adult/child \$3/free; ☎ 9am-5pm), where Sir Donald Bradman, Australia's greatest cricketer, was born in 1908. The Bradmans moved to Bowral when the Don was still very young, and it's there he learned his craft (see p132).

Cootamundra's climate means that European trees flourish (the elms along Cooper St are over 100 years old) and there are several formal parks. **Albert Park** (Hovell St) is near the train station and **Jubilee Park**, on the other side of the city centre, features the **Captains' Walk**, a series of busts of Australia's cricket captains.

Cootamundra is also known for the **Cootamundra wattle** (*Acacia baileyana*); its profuse yellow flowers bloom in July and August each year. Although native to this area, Cootamundra wattle has been planted throughout the cooler areas of southern Australia. The **Wattle Time Festival** (www.cootamundra.biz) is held in August.

Sleeping & Eating

Cootamundra Caravan Park (☎ 6942 1080; 55 Mackay St; camp site per adult \$20, cabin without/with bathroom \$44/60) Situated in pretty Jubilee Park, this sits beside Muttama Creek. It's calm here, prob-

ably because of all the space between sites and the mix of European and native trees.

Albion Hotel (☎ 6942 1177; StephanSellars@bigpond.com; cnr Parker & Wallendoon Sts; dm/s/d/f \$20/35/55/80) This is the oldest pub, yet it has spacious rooms with private bathrooms and TVs.

White Ibis B&B (☎ 6942 1850; www.whiteibis.com.au; 21 Wallendoon St; s/d \$50/80) This B&B has been restored to a boutique hotel, pretty with its Juliet balconies, and it's just a block from the station. Ask about longer-term rates.

Harrison Deep (☎ 6942 7799; 115 Parker St; mains \$20-25; ☎ lunch Wed-Fri, dinner Thu-Sat) There are many cafés, especially along Parker St, but top restaurants such as this one are too good to miss. Harrison Deep is known for its specialist lamb dishes using local texel lamb. Start with the cutlets with Asian mint on kumara rosti.

Delv's Cafe (☎ 6942 3400; 248 Parker St; mains \$15-29; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Thu, to midnight Fri-Sun) This friendly place is buzzing, especially on open-mic nights, and in summer when there's live music in the courtyard. The fave meal is Coota by the Bay, a New York-style steak topped with scallops and garlic prawns.

Getting There & Away

There's a **CountryLink Travel Centre** (☎ 6940 2921) at the train station. Fast trains (XPTs) running between Sydney (\$72; five hours) and Melbourne (\$90; 6½ hours) stop here twice daily. Buses to Mildura (\$98; 8½ hours) connect with the XPT service.

SPITFIRES OVER AUSTRALIA

Aviation enthusiasts shouldn't miss **Temora**, a prosperous town and home to the **Temora Aviation Museum** (☎ 6977 1088; www.aviationmuseum.com.au; 1 Menzies St; ☎ 10am-4pm).

During WWII, Temora was home to the No 10 Elementary Flying Training School (10 EFTS) with more than 10,000 personnel at the school training more than 2400 pilots. Since then it has hosted more sport-aviation activities including gliding, parachuting and ultra-light aircraft operations.

Sydney businessman David Lowy completed an aviation museum here in 2002 with Australia's oldest flying Tiger Moth, a Canberra bomber, Vampire jet fighter and many more. Aircraft are housed in a 1980-sq-metre hangar, and the museum holds Flying Weekends about every month. When a second Spitfire was bought in 2006, the September air show became the talk of town, because for the first time there would be two Spitfires flying in formation over Australian soil.

Just to tempt you, watch the 2005 air display on www.recreationalflying.net and click on Temora airshow Oct 05 review.

If you're not so wild about planes, keep your feet on the ground at the enormous **Rural Museum** (☎ 6977 1291; Junee Rd; ☎ 2-4.30pm) which includes Sir Donald Bradman's first home, a hardwood slab hut, working machinery, pioneer buildings and Jimmy Sharman's boxing troupe memorabilia.

Contact Temora's **visitors centre** (☎ 6977 1511; www.temora.nsw.gov.au; 294 Hoskins St) for further information.

NARRANDERA

☎ 02 / pop 6600

On the banks of Lake Talbot and the Murrumbidgee River, Narrandera is known for its beautiful green avenues and parks. With good services and accommodation, it makes a pleasant stopover for a day or two.

Orientation & Information

The Newell Hwy runs through town as Cadell St; the Sturt Hwy passes just south of the town. East St is the commercial centre. The helpful **visitors centre** (☎ 1800 672 392; Narrandera St; ☹ 9am-5pm) is in Cadell St. Here you'll find 'the largest playable guitar in the southern hemisphere' – although you need two people to play, and you wouldn't get much of a tune out of it.

Sights & Activities

In the best tradition of small-town museums, the **Parkside Cottage Museum** (☎ 6959 1372; Wynnam St; adult/child \$2/0.50; ☹ 2-5pm Mon & Tue, 11am-5pm Wed & Sun) has an extremely eclectic collection, from '1000 years of monarchy' to skis from Scott's Antarctic expedition.

Lake Talbot Complex (☎ 6959 1211; Lake Dr; adult/child \$2.50/1.50; ☹ 6-8am, 10am-1pm, 4-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun) is a beautiful but faded watersports reserve, partly a long artificial lake and partly a swimming centre with an exhilarating 100m water slide.

Bush (including a koala regeneration area) surrounds the lake and a number of trails make up the **Bundidgerry Walking Track**. The visitors centre has a map and brochure.

The **John Lake Centre** (☎ 6959 9021; Buckingbong Rd; adult/child \$5.50/2.75; ☹ 8.30am-4pm), at the Narrandera Fisheries, breeds endangered fish species of the Murray Darling river system. There are guided tours throughout the day (look out for a huge Murray cod named Agro).

Festivals & Events

In early February, **water-skiing championships** take place on Lake Talbot. March sees the **John O'Brien Bush Festival** which celebrates the bush poetry of Father Hartigan ('We'll all be rooned said Hanrahan, in accent most forlorn'). Check these, and other events at www.narrandera.nsw.gov.au/events.html.

Sleeping

Lake Talbot Tourist Park (☎ 6959 1302; www.laketalbot.com; Gordon St; camp site per adult \$22, cabin std/deluxe \$35/65) This place spreads itself around a pic-

turesque grassy setting on a hill overlooking Lake Talbot, right next to the swimming complex. Dense redgum forest stretches to the horizon. Ask about the weekly rates.

Murrumbidgee Hotel (☎ 6959 2011; cnr East & Audley Sts; s/d \$25/35) This nice old place has big, clean rooms and friendly service, excellent shared bathrooms and living room, and one gorgeous veranda.

Narrandera Gateway Motor Inn (☎ 6959 1877; ourmotel@ozemail.com.au; 152 East St; s/d/f \$65/70/75; ☎ ☹ ☹ ☹) It's very quiet and comfortable staying in these spacious, colourful rooms right in the centre of town. The pool is large, with a barbecue area, and there are mountain bikes for hire

Historic Star Lodge (☎ 6959 1768; www.historicstarlodge.com.au; 64 Whitton St; s/d \$66/88, d with bathroom \$110) This impressive old hotel (c 1916), complete with verandas and iron lace, is now a beautiful, if old-fashioned, B&B. Your host and chef, Pat St George, will look after you very well. There's a two-bedroom flat available (\$120).

Eating

Narrandera Bakery (☎ 6959 3677; cnr East & Bolton Sts; dishes \$4-7; ☹ 7.30am-5.45pm Mon-Fri, to 2.30pm Sat) This serves sandwiches and fresh baked pies, in bright and cheery surroundings.

Classique Café Restaurant (☎ 6959 1411; 124 East St; mains \$6-10; ☹ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4.30pm Sat) A cosy place with seriously good coffee and an interesting range of gourmet sandwiches and salads.

Bellissimo Pizza & Pasta (☎ 6959 3010; 131 East St; dishes \$8-20; ☹ 7.30am-10pm) This is a friendly family restaurant that the locals unashamedly recommend for the cheap but tasty Italian dishes.

Charles on East (☎ 6959 2042; 77 East St; dishes \$16-21; ☹ lunch daily, dinner Mon-Sat) Inside or out, it's a lovely place to eat the excellent food like Beef Wellington with mushroom farce. It's olive green with pressed tin ceiling, and play equipment out by the deck. And there's a pub menu (\$7 to \$17 with an \$8.50 roast on Sunday) if you'd rather.

Getting There & Away

Regional Air Express (Rex; ☎ 13 17 13; www.rex.com.au) flies into Narrandera, including flights to/from Sydney three times daily. **Greyhound** (☎ 13 14 99) buses go daily to Sydney (10 hours) and Adelaide (12 hours), stopping at the Mobil roadhouse on the Sturt Hwy. **CountryLink** (☎ 13

22 32) XPT train/bus service stops twice daily between Sydney (\$90; 7½ hours) and Griffith (\$14; one hour), and goes daily to Melbourne (\$90; seven hours).

LEETON

☎ 02 / pop 12030

As the headquarters of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme (MIA), Leeton is at the centre of one of Australia's largest regions for growing fruit, vegetables and rice.

Leeton was founded as a MIA town in 1913; there was no settlement here before the water came. The first of the Walter Burley Griffin-designed towns, it remains close to the architect's original vision, and is developing into a thriving commercial centre.

Orientation & Information

Most streets are named after trees or local products; the main street is Pine Ave, named after the Murray pine, a native species.

The **visitors centre** (☎ 6953 6481; www.leetontourism.com.au; 10 Yanco Ave; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat & Sun) has several maps including forest drives and heritage walks. It's in a beautiful house, formerly the MIA manager's home, and has a charming statue, in memory of women workers at Letona processing factory, in its gardens.

There's internet access at the **Shire Library** (cnr Myrtle & Willow Sts; per hr \$6; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-12.30pm Sat) and the **Soldiers Club** (☎ 6953 3444; Acacia Ave; per hr \$4; ☹ 11am-11pm).

Sights & Activities

Rice-growing began near Leeton in 1924, and today the Riverina exports 80% of its million-tonne-plus crop each year. Learn all about it at the **SunRice Centre** (☎ 6953 0596; www.sunrice.com.au; Calrose St; admission free; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri), which has presentations at 9.30am and 2.45pm.

Lillypilly Estate (☎ 6953 4069; www.lillypilly.com; Lillypilly Rd; ☹ 10am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) and **Toorak Wines** (☎ 6953 2333; www.toorakwines.com.au; Toorak Rd; ☹ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) are two local wineries open for tastings and sales.

Leeton has several Art Deco gems, including the majestic 1930s **Roxy Theatre** (Pine Ave), which still operates in all its neon glory on Friday and Saturday nights. The visitors centre has a map outlining other buildings of note.

Sleeping & Eating

An Oasis Caravan Park (☎ 6953 3882; fax 6953 6256; 90 Corbie Hill Rd; camp site per adult \$17, cabin std/deluxe

\$42/56; ☹) This accommodation option spreads prettily in the bush; it's a relaxing spot with plenty of shade.

Leeton Hotel (☎ 6953 2027; fax 6953 3765; 71 Pine Ave; dm/s/d \$13/25/35) This offers clean basic rooms above an airy pub with a water feature on the outside deck. It's right in the centre of town.

Historic Hydro Motor Inn (☎ 6953 1555; hydro@dragnet.com.au; Chelmsford Pl; s/d \$65/99) This is a huge, delightfully faded old home with a National Trust listing. There's a range of rooms, including spa suites (from \$95) and a three-bedroom apartment (\$160). If you're not staying, there are daily tours so you can look around.

Mick's Bakehouse (☎ 6953 2212; 56 Pine Ave; mains \$4-10; ☹ 6am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 7am-2pm Sat & Sun) It has excellent pies, pastas, coffee and cakes, in a grand room with a jukebox and lounge chairs.

Pages on Pine (☎ 6953 7300; 119 Pine Ave; mains \$19-24; ☹ lunch & dinner Wed-Sun) It serves a range of tapas, such as grilled oysters with pancetta, that are perfect before a night at the movies across the road, or stay for delights like lamb shanks on mash. There's American pancakes on Sunday.

Getting There & Away

CountryLink (☎ 13 22 32) buses between Griffith (\$9; one hour) and Wagga Wagga (\$14; two hours), and **Greyhound** (☎ 13 14 99) buses between Sydney (\$155; 10 hours) and Adelaide (\$165; 14 hours) both stop daily at the visitors centre.

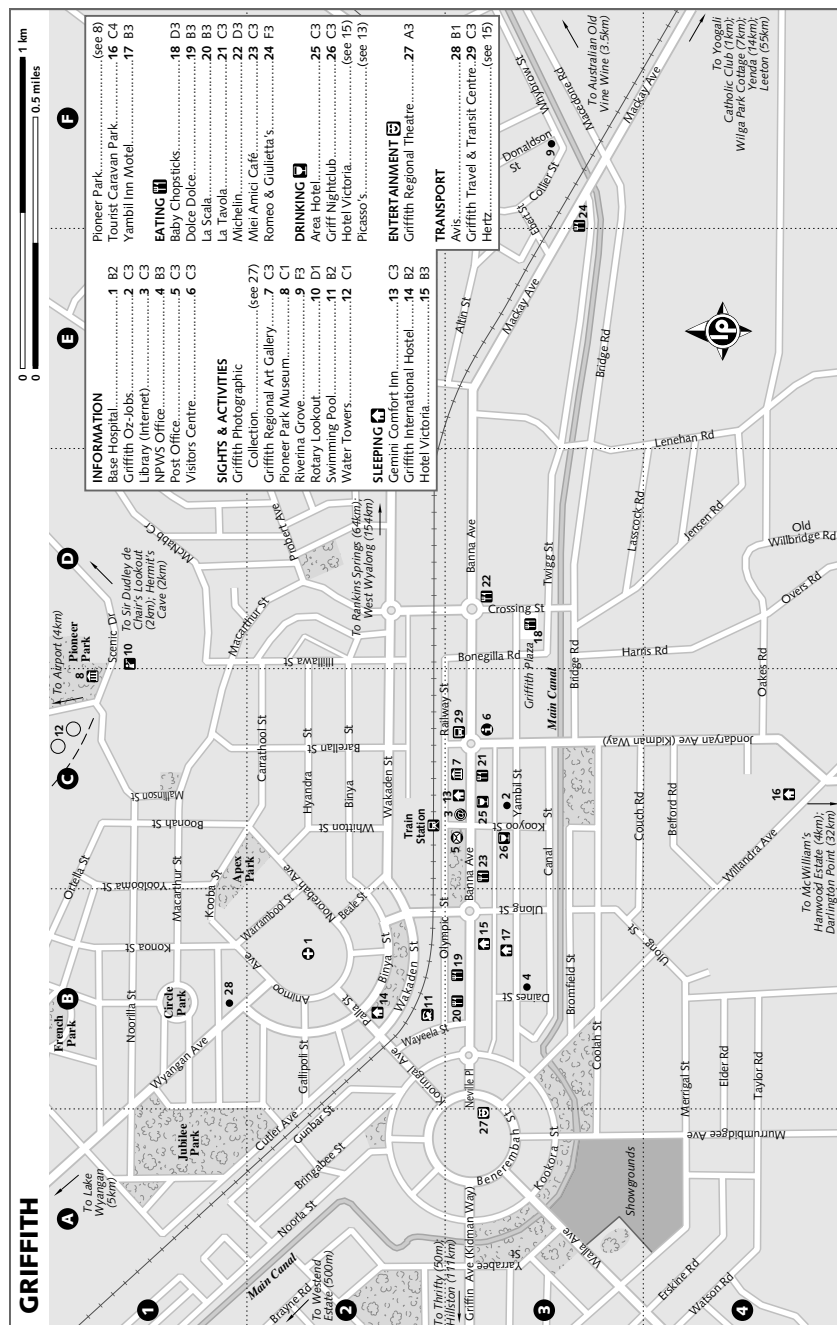
GRIFFITH

☎ 02 / pop 24,910

Griffith is small but sophisticated; its cultural mix of Europeans, Indians and South Pacific Islanders gives it a cosmopolitan atmosphere. Quite clearly the wine-and-food capital of the Riverina, Griffith's vineyards, cafés and restaurants offer a variety and quality that's recognised nationally.

Information

The **visitors centre** (☎ 6962 4145; www.griffith.com.au; cnr Banna Ave & Jondaryan Aves; ☹ 9am-5pm) has a life-size WWII Fairey Firefly plane outside. The **NPWS office** (☎ 6966 8100; www.npws.nsw.gov.au; 200 Yambil St; ☹ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri) has information on Cocoparra, Willandra and newly-created Oolambeyan National Parks. Access the internet at the **library** (cnr Banna Ave & Kooyoo St; per hr \$6).



With the lowest unemployment rate in Australia, it's hard *not* to get a job in Griffith. Grape harvesting usually begins in February and lasts six to eight weeks. A multitude of other crops such as oranges, melons and onions are harvested during the year. The **Griffith Oz-Jobs** (☎ 6964 3232; Karin.Penninga@chandlermacleod.com; 108b Yambil St) can help you find casual and seasonal work: **harvest hotline** (☎ 1300 720 126).

Very few of the vineyards and orchards have accommodation, or even space to camp, so you'll probably have to stay in Griffith, which means that you'll need your own transport.

Sights & Activities

High on a hill north of the town centre, **Pioneer Park Museum** (☎ 6962 4196; cnr Remembrance & Scenic Drs; adult/child \$8/4; ☎ 9am-4.30pm) is a re-creation of an early Riverina village, with an old hospital, a music room and other fascinating displays in original old buildings. The new **Italian museum** even includes a very early knitting machine brought here by migrants.

Not far from Pioneer Park is the **Rotary Lookout**, with great views of the town and the surrounding farmland. Also up here on Scenic Hill are three **walking tracks**: Trates Loop (2km), Barinji Loop (5km) and Narinari Loop (6.5km). About 1.5km east of Pioneer Park is **Sir Dudley de Chair's Lookout**. Just below is the **hermit's cave**, home of an Italian recluse for many years (see p286).

With the high quality of produce in the area, a stop at **Riverina Grove** (☎ 6962 7988; www.riverinagrove.com.au; 4 Whybrow St; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat) becomes a real indulgence. This mecca of gourmet food allows you to sample everything from marinated fetta to rich nougat, and you won't leave empty handed.

Though small, the Art Deco **Griffith Regional Art Gallery** (☎ 6962 5991; 167-85 Banna Ave; adult/child \$2/1; ☎ 10.30am-4.30pm Tue-Sat) has a lovely sense of space. Exhibitions change monthly and there's also a permanent collection of contemporary Australian jewellery.

The **Griffith Regional Theatre** (☎ 6961 8388; theatre@griffith.nsw.gov.au; Neville Pl; adult/child \$2.50/free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) has a massive, community-produced soft-sculpture curtain depicting the region and its activities. You can see it at 11am, 2pm and 4pm provided there's no concert under way. The theatre is also home to the interesting **Griffith Photographic Collection**, dating back to the foundation of the city, and the community's **Mosaic Lifecycle** project.

Griffith Regional Aquatic Leisure Centre (☎ 6964 7071; 5 Wayeela St; adult/child/family \$5/4/12; ☎ 6am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-5.30pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun) has a great spread of indoor pools looking out onto grassy play areas, gymnasium and crèche.

WINERIES

The Griffith area has a large number of wineries, featuring beautiful surroundings and award-winning wines. **McWilliam's Hanwood Estate** (☎ 6963 0001; Jack McWilliam Rd, Hanwood; ☎ tastings 9am-5pm Mon-Sat) is the oldest (1913). Also among the best for quality and range are **Westend Estate** (☎ 6964 1506; Brayne Rd; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun), started in 1945, and **Australian Old Vine Wine** (☎ 6963 5239; Rosetto Rd, Beelbanga; ☎ 10am-4pm), a boutique winery with wine to suit everyone's taste.

Check out www.griffith.nsw.gov.au and then click on the visitors centre's attractions section to download a wineries map and get opening times.

Festivals & Events

Hold on Easter Saturday, **La Festa** (www.lafesta.org.au) is a big occasion celebrating the multicultural community with music and food from around the world, displays of award-winning wines, and food stalls covering the streets. Then mid-October, everybody is in town for the **Festival of Gardens** (www.griffith.nsw.gov.au), when the magic of springtime is celebrated, unique gardens opened and amazing citrus sculptures produced.

Sleeping

If you are doing seasonal work in Griffith, there are two options for cheap longer-term accommodation, but they fill up quickly.

Pioneer Park (☎ 6962 4196; Remembrance Dr; d nightly/weekly \$15/85) In former shearers' quarters built of corrugated iron, the dorms are small and basic (this is a historic building) but there's a large communal kitchen and lounge. Unfortunately it's a steep walk from town and there's no public transport.

Griffith International Hostel (☎ 6964 4236; 112 Binya St; d nightly/weekly \$20/110; ☎) On a pleasant street near the town centre, this Griffith hostel is rough around the edges, with large dorms. Available long-term for international travellers, Australians are welcome to an overnight bed (\$12).

Tourist Caravan Park (☎ 6964 2144; 919 Willandra Ave; caravan/site with bathroom \$19/24, cabin \$49-66; ☎)

This is the most convenient caravan park; it's small, all crisp and organised, and has a pool and grassy play or sitting areas.

Yambil Inn Motel (☎ 6964 1233; 155 Yambil St; s/d \$86/93; 📍 📞 📺) This small place has a pretty tropical-garden feel with a good pool to relax by on hot days. Walk a block to the city centre.

Hotel Victoria (☎ 6962 1299; 384 Banna Ave; B&B s/d \$85/95; 📍 📞 📺) The Victoria features bright corridors, cheerful rooms, good bathrooms and friendly staff. If you like it quiet, ask for a room away from the pub noise.

Gemini Comfort Inn (☎ 6962 3833; www.geminigriffith.com.au; 201-27 Banna Ave; budget \$70, std s/d \$85/95, s/d incl spa \$108/117; 📍 📞) A comfortable place in the perfect location, right in the centre of town, with a popular cocktail bar and super-friendly staff.

Eating

The quality of the food in Griffith, in particular the Italian cuisine, is outstanding; it's hard not to spend the whole day eating!

Baby Chopsticks (☎ 6964 5412; Griffith Plaza, Yambil St; dishes \$5-9; 📍 📞 📺 11am-8pm Tue-Fri, to 4pm Sat-Mon) This serves grand amounts of filling fried rice, Mongolian beef, sweet chilli chicken – eat in or take away.

Dolce Dolce (☎ 6962 1888; 449 Banna Ave; mains \$5-10; 📍 📞 9am-5pm Wed-Sun) Come here for fine Italian torte and pastries, a morning coffee and an excellent selection of lunch dishes.

Miei Amici Cafe (☎ 6962 5999; 350 Banna St; dishes \$6-12; 📍 📞 7am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) This tiny place is where everyone meets over the great breakfasts. Try the bacon-and-pancake stack, and get acquainted at 'My Friends' Café.

Romeo & Giulietta's (☎ 6962 7728; 40 Mackay Ave; mains \$9-19; 📍 📞 dinner Thu-Sun) Try here for traditional wood-oven pizzas, grilled fish and pasta.

La Tavola (☎ 6962 7777; 188 Banna Ave; mains \$10-19; 📍 📞 lunch & dinner) A bright and cheery restaurant with an excellent range of Italian dishes such as saltimbocca. The owner is Italian, loves food, and will be very pleased to help you with your selection.

La Scala (☎ 6962 4322; 455b Banna Ave; dishes \$21-7; 📍 📞 dinner Tue-Sat) Hidden down steps and behind an old pink door is La Scala, a cellar with a great reputation and a happy laid-back feel. The menu includes old favourites like scallopine al funghi. But it's hard to go past the steak, and there's an extensive list of local wines.

Michelin (☎ 6964 9006; 72 Banna Ave; dishes \$27-9; 📍 📞 lunch Tue-Sun, dinner Tue-Sat, brunch Sun) The elegant dining room is just the start. Chef Antony More prepares stunning Mod Oz meals like spiced lamb rump with eggplant caviar, Persian feta pepperoncini and olive crusted kipfler potatoes. The reputation is well deserved.

Drinking

Yoogali Catholic Club (☎ 6962 2519; Leeton Rd) The biggest night out in Griffith is Dusk til Dawn, held one Saturday night each month, although the club is open till late every night.

Hotel Victoria (☎ 6962 1299; 384 Banna Ave) If you miss out on Dusk til Dawn, console yourself at this popular watering hole open till late with live music Fridays and Saturdays.

Picasso's (☎ 6962 9662; 201-227 Banna Ave) At the Gemini Comfort Inn (opposite), Picasso's has an extensive cocktail list and a relaxed atmosphere in delightful surroundings.

Griff nightclub (☎ 6962 4325; cnr Kooyoo & Yambil Sts) The ugly modern Griff Hotel can be a fun place, especially on Saturday night. It often has local bands and is open late.

Area Hotel (☎ 6962 1322; 202 Banna St) is the in-place this week. Revamped but still gloriously ugly in that grey-and-pink carpet, brown wall, backless bar stool sort of way, it features local bands and has regular jukebox parties.

Getting There & Away

Regional Express (Rex; ☎ 13 17 13; www.rex.com.au) flies between Griffith and Sydney.

All buses, except CountryLink (which stops at the train station), stop at the **Griffith Travel & Transit Centre** (☎ 6962 7199; 121 Banna Ave) in the Shell petrol station opposite the plane memorial. You can book Greyhound, V/Line and CountryLink tickets here, with connections to regional coach lines. All services run daily to Adelaide (\$108; 14 hours), Melbourne (\$98; nine hours), Sydney (\$98; 10 hours) and Mildura (\$80; six hours).

Getting Around

Griffith has a **taxi service** (☎ 6964 1444) and **airport express bus service** (☎ 0418 696 280). Bookings are essential.

Car-rental companies are at the airport and also at the following places.

Avis (☎ 6962 6266; 7 Wyangan Ave)

Hertz (☎ 6964 1233; Yambil St) At the Yambil Inn Motel.

Thrifty (☎ 6962 9122; 2 Griffin Ave) At Westpoint Motors.

LAKE CARGELLIGO

☎ 02 / pop 1300

On the flat western plains north of Griffith, Lake Cargelligo, 'the Lake', is an unexpected oasis. The **visitors centre** (☎ 6898 1501; 1 Foster St; 📍 📞 10am-4pm) can give you information about the hotels and motels around the lake, plus where to see local and indigenous art. The 8km-wide lake is home to numerous species of birds including pelicans, swans and black cockatoos, and is popular for **water sports**.

Lake View Caravan Park (☎ 6898 1077; Naradhan & Wombony Sts; camp site \$11-15, cabin \$44; 📍) is right by the lake and has a large barbecue area.

WILLANDRA NATIONAL PARK

Like Mungo National Park (p273), Willandra is part of a huge sheep station on a system of dry lakes. The lakes here, especially **Hall's Lake**, tend to become temporary wetlands more often than Mungo's ancient basins, and **birdlife** is abundant. During spring there are magnificent displays of **wild flowers**, and **emus** and **kangaroos** can be found on the open plains throughout the year.

The historical interest of Willandra centres on the wool industry and station life, although there were certainly Aboriginal civilisations in the area, probably of the same antiquity as those at Lake Mungo. In 1869 some enterprising Melbourne grocers formed the sheep station **Big Willandra** – the national park (about 19,400 hectares), formed in 1972, is less than 10% of Big Willandra.

The **Willandra Homestead** (☎ 6967 8159), built in 1918, is gloriously traditional, low-slung and U-shaped, with a wide veranda all the way around that's great for shade and trike races. Established rose gardens and shade trees surround it. The homestead was the centre of station life and the distance of accommodation from the homestead indicated the status of the workers; furthest away is the tin-lined shearers' quarters (take time to explore the graffiti in each room) – much less comfortable in the heat than the thatched ram shed, where the kings of the station (the rams who made all the money) lived.

INLAND ITALIANA

Griffith used to make headlines for its alleged links to the Mafia, the murder of an anti-drugs crusader and police corruption. But today the emphasis is on tasty produce, and the large Italian community is working hard to free itself of a quarter of a century of infamy.

Italians have been in Griffith since the early days of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme; three pioneering Italians, Enrico Lucca, Luigi Gulielmini and Francesco Bicego left the mines in Broken Hill (p267) and took up farming in 1913. Many more miners and construction workers joined them when war broke out. Originally from the Veneti region around Verona, they lived in shacks, working hard to repay the cost of their fare from Italy.

Valentino Ceccata was one of these irrigation pioneers. He slowly started a modest building business and got occasional contract work through the MIA Commission. When the Italian consulate in Sydney heard about this, it directed new immigrants to Valentino's home. Within a few months he had over 40 people camped on his property. Valentino rotated his six staff every week to give everyone a chance at earning some pay. Eventually the stream of arrivals became too much, and Valentino had to travel to Sydney to inform the consul.

It was a difficult time: during the Depression, prices collapsed and fruit was left to rot.

One Italian farmer who lived in a tent couldn't sell his Griffith grapes, so he decided to make some wine. Eighty years later his grandson, Darren de Bortoli, is the managing director of a company that makes half a million cases of wine a year.

Others were not so lucky. Valerio Recitti arrived in Australia in 1916, and in the 1920s sought refuge in a cave near Griffith. Valerio kept entirely to himself, creating a private utopia of massive stone galleries, cliffside gardens and floral-painted walls. After falling and injuring himself he was discovered and interned at Hay during WWII on suspicion of being a spy.

While Australian-born farmers and inexperienced soldier settlers went broke and left for the cities, this was not an option for the Italians whose support networks were confined to the area. So they pooled their resources and bought farms at the bedrock prices. In 1929 Italians held 67 small lots; these days they own almost all the irrigated farms. Many came to Griffith from Calabria, in southern Italy, after WWII. In the last 30 years, 'tribal' distinctions between the Veneto and Calabrese communities have become less distinct.

There are walking tracks in the park, none of them very long, and there's the **Merton Motor Trail**, which takes you on a loop around the eastern half of the park.

Sleeping

Willandra Homestead (r/f/whole homestead \$60/80/350) has been faithfully restored, with bathrooms, sitting rooms and a spacious kitchen. The old station's **men's quarters** (r \$25) has two double bunks per room and an outside loo. The most popular option is the **cottage** (q \$50, per extra person \$10), which sleeps eight. Book through **Griffith NPWS office** (☎ 6966 8100; fax 6962 5480).

There are several **camp sites** (site per adult/child \$3/2) along Willandra Creek, with pit toilets, fireplaces and showers. Bring your own drinking water.

Getting There & Away

Main access to the park, around 40km west of Hillston, is via the Hillston–Mossgiel road. Entrance costs \$7 per day per vehicle. It takes very little rain to close the roads: **Road Info** (☎ 6965 1306; www.carrathool.nsw.gov.au/).

HAY

☎ 02 / pop 3550

This might be flat, one-tree plains country but Hay is colourful, busy, and its position at the junction of the Sturt and Cobb Hwys makes it an important transit point. It's also very much the centre of this rural area. Just watch the main street fill with utes (utility trucks) on Saturday morning as station hands from far and wide come to play in Hay's sporting teams.

The **visitors centre** (☎ 6993 4045; www.visithay.com.au; 407 Moppett St; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, to noon Sat & Sun) also has an **Amenities Centre** (free; ☎ 6am–6pm) with showers, toilets and picnic area.

There is internet access at **Share a Little Software** (☎ 6993 1104; 387 Moore St; per hr \$5; ☎ 9am–5.30pm Mon–Fri, to 1pm Sat) and **Hay Newsagency** (☎ 6993 1081; 142 Lachlan St; per hr \$6; ☎ 9am–6pm).

Sights & Activities

Shearers enjoy legendary status in this part of Australia, and the innovative **Shear Outback** (☎ 6993 4000; cnr Sturt & Cobb Hwys; adult/child \$15/8; ☎ 9am–5pm) is devoted to these colourful characters. If you've ever felt the draw of a bushman's life, the interactive displays at Shear Outback will give you all the incentive you need.

Hay housed three internment camps during WWII, and the **Hay POW & Internment Camp Interpretive Centre** (☎ 6993 2112; Murray St; adult \$2; ☎ 9am–5pm), at the 1882 railway station, gives an insight into that time, telling the stories of the 'Dunera boys', and Japanese and Italian internees.

There are several impressive old buildings in town, including **Bishop's Lodge** (☎ 6993 1727; Roset St; adult \$4; ☎ 2–4.30pm Mon–Sat Apr–Dec, 10am–12.30pm Jan–Mar), a mansion built entirely of corrugated iron as a residence for the Anglican bishop in 1888. It's set amid acclaimed heritage rose gardens that surround the magnificent verandas.

From an insane asylum to a maternity hospital, the **Old Hay Gaol** (Church St; adult/child \$2/1; ☎ 9am–5pm) has had many uses but is now a museum with a fascinating collection of memorabilia from around the district. One cell is set up as it was when the gaol was a detention centre for wayward girls, its last incarnation before it closed in 1973.

Festivals & Events

Every month features exhibitions in Hay, but the **Booligal Sheep Races** (www.visithay.com.au) over the September long weekend really attracts the crowds.

Sleeping & Eating

Hay Plains Holiday Park (☎ 6993 1875; camp site per adult \$19, cabin std/deluxe \$45/55; ☎ ☎) This small park very close to everything has quaint little cabins and a pleasant swimming pool and barbecue area.

Riverina Hotel (☎ 6993 1137; Lachlan St; s/d/f \$30/40/45) This offers basic rooms that have been recently renovated, and large shared bathrooms. The rooms are well away from the bright modern bar area, which sports a magnificent timber bar.

Bidgee Motor Inn (☎ 6993 2260; Lachlan St; s/d \$65/75; ☎ ☎) Right in the centre, yet pleasantly open and quiet, the Bidgee has spacious rooms set around a playground, barbecue and saltwater pool.

Bank B&B (☎ 6993 1730; www.users.tpg.com.au/users/tssk; 86 Lachlan St; s/d \$80/120; ☎ ☎) On the main street, this is a charming place in a building with heaps of character, although the facilities are modern. The lounge area opens onto the balcony of this historic mansion, built in 1891. It feels rather special out there, watching the people passing below.

Haveachat (☎ 6993 2031; 125 Lachlan St; meals \$3–9; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, to 1pm Sat) A large blue café, the meeting place for many locals, with grand steak sandwiches and big breakfasts.

Cumquats (☎ 6993 4399; 161 Lachlan St; meals \$7–15; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9am–2pm Sat & Sun) It's charming here, with interesting dishes such as the warm Thai chicken salad and decent coffee among buckets of fresh flowers.

Jolly Jumbuck (☎ 6993 4718; 148 Lachlan St; mains \$10–25; ☎ lunch & dinner) Located at the Riverina Hotel, it has \$10 lunch specials but lash out and order the fantastic lamb cutlets from its extensive range of country style meals. There's a large selection of wines.

Getting There & Away

Long-distance buses stop at the Mobil petrol station, Sturt Hwy South Hay. **Greyhound** (☎ 13 14 99) buses stop here on the daily run between Adelaide (11 hours) and Sydney (13½ hours).

CountryLink (☎ 13 22 42) XPT train/bus services stop here daily from Sydney (\$110; 11½ hours), continuing to Mildura (\$51; four hours) or Melbourne (\$119; 11 hours).

MURRAY RIVER

Albury, the largest town on the Murray River, is covered on p316.

COROWA

☎ 02 / pop 10,970

This historic river town is known as the 'Birthplace of Federation'. When Victoria was proclaimed a colony in 1850 it caused so many customs hassles across the Murray River that people in the area pushed for federation of the colonies. In 1893 a conference was held in Corowa that began the process of Federation, achieved in 1901. There had been previous conferences, but Corowa's was the first to capture the attention of the public.

Another lasting product from Corowa is the Tom Roberts painting *Shearing the Rams*, which was researched in the woolshed of Brocklesby station.

Orientation & Information

The main street, where you'll find most of the pubs and shops, is Sanger St. It leads down to the Foord Bridge across the Murray River to Wahgunyah. Federation Ave is a leafy street

cutting through town to the Mulwala road. The **visitors centre** (☎ 6033 3221, 1800 814 054; www.corowa.nsw.gov.au; 88 Sanger St; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Sat, to 1pm Sun) hires bikes (per day \$15).

Sights & Activities

The **Federation Museum** (☎ 6033 1568; Queen St; adult/child \$2/0.50; ☎ 2–5pm Sat & Sun), opposite the neat Ellerslie Gardens, has displays on the history of Federation. There are also sketches by Tommy McCrae, a member of the Bangerang people who lived in the area at the time of first contact with Europeans. The sketches are among the few records of an indigenous people's reaction to European arrival.

The **Star Hotel** (Sanger St) has old cellars which are filled with memorabilia from the town; ask at the pub for access.

You can catch your own yabbies and cook them at the **Murray Bank Yabby Farm** (☎ 6033 2922; www.yabbyfarm.com; 76 Federation Ave; family \$25; ☎ by appt Nov–Apr). Note that yabbies sleep during winter.

Corowa is home to the **Australian Soaring Centre** (☎ 6033 5036; www.australian-soaring-corowa.com; Redlands Rd). Come out to Corowa airport between October and March when the thermals are good. Joy flights run from \$100, or try some skydiving (priceless).

Festivals & Events

Australia Day Weekend is **Corowa National Federation Festival** (www.corowa.nsw.gov.au) with art exhibitions, horse racing, rowing and motor sports. Corowa is a prime place to base yourself in June, for Victoria's grand wine festivities and the nearby **Rutherglen Winery Walkabout** (www.rutherglenvic.com).

Sleeping & Eating

Bindaree Motel & Caravan Park (☎ 6033 2500; www.bindaree.net; 454 Honour Ave; camp site per adult \$20, cabin std/deluxe \$55/65, self-contained motel unit d \$80; ☎ ☎ ☎) Pleasantly spread along the river, with a boat ramp and beach, or a pool and spa if you'd rather – plenty of relaxing can be done here.

Royal Hotel (☎ 6033 1395; 95 Sanger St; s/d \$30/60) It's newly renovated and looking gorgeous, which adds to the value of these pleasant rooms that open onto the amazing veranda.

Murray Bank Holiday Units & Yabby Farm (☎ 6033 2922; www.yabbyfarm.com; 76 Federation Ave; d/f \$65/100) A delightful place, with self-contained units spread around the lake. Your hosts' craftwork, like hand-felted scarves, is also for sale. Ask about long term and single rates.

DETOUR: TRACKING DOWN NED

Jerilderie, up there on the Kidman Way, is Ned Kelly country. The Kelly Gang held up Jerilderie for three days in 1879, earning themselves an Australia-wide reputation for brazenness. The NSW government declared him an outlaw and the colony was no longer a safe haven. Yet the speech Ned made to his captives in the Royal Mail Hotel (still operating as a pub; 22 Jerilderie St) and the letter he wrote complaining of his treatment at the hands of the authorities aroused the suspicion that young Ned might be a latent political activist.

The streets of Jerilderie reflect young Ned's days. Pop into the old post office, now called **Willows** (☎ 5886 1666; Powell St; ☹ 10am-4pm), to have a cuppa, check out the museum of the gang's memorabilia and collect your maps for the National Ned Kelly Trail and Horgan's Walk.

Down the street is the **blacksmith's shop** (☎ 5886 1513; Powell St; ☹ by appt) where the gang had their horses shod and charged it to the NSW government. Cheeky. Stay the night in the atmospheric **Do Book Inn** (☎ 5886 1513; horseshoebendjerilderie@bigpond.com; 17 Powell St; d/q \$75/125), a fascinating B&B cottage made mostly of recycled materials. It overlooks a billabong and has wonderful sculptures in the garden.

size, toddler, learners – at **Deniliquin Swimming Pool** (Poitiers St).

Festivals & Events

Deniliquin holds an annual **Ute Muster** (www.deniliumuster.com.au), when bush boys – and some girls – get together for an action-packed weekend in their utility vehicles, 6172 of them at last count! The event is part of the **Play on the Plains Festival** (☎ 5881 3388), held on the Labour Day long weekend in October, which celebrates Australian culture with country music, celebrity guests, carnivals and competitions.

Sleeping

McLean Beach Caravan Park (☎ 5881 2448; www.mcleanbeachcaravanpark.com.au; Butler St; camp site per adult \$20, cabin std/deluxe \$65/95; ☹) This is next to a magnificent sandy river beach with a children's safe enclosure, river redgums and boat launching facilities. The children's play equipment is spectacular, the cabins are self-contained and the amenities are shiny new.

White Lion Hotel Motel (☎ 5881 2699; 53 Russell St; s/d/tr/f \$40/50/60/100; ☹) These pleasant motel rooms are set around the edge of the block, away from the pub. Great value, with a communal family room, but there's no cooking facilities.

Riverview Motel (☎ 5881 2311; www.riverviewmotel.com.au; 1 Butler St; s/d \$65/75; ☹) Wake up to a view through a haze of gums from your lovely, spacious room with private porch overlooking the river. Can't tear yourself away? Riverview Bistro (mains \$15 to \$20; open for dinner) serves the best steak with chips and veg.

Edward River Houseboats (☎ 5881 4540; www.edwardriverhouseboats.com.au; next to bridge; 3-7-nights from \$580/890) It's fun on beautiful Edward River passing 36km of landscapes, as you laze, fish or water-ski from a luxury houseboat.

Eating

Old Dublin Café (☎ 5881 3921; 30 Napier St; mains \$5-9; ☹ 7.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat & Sun) Go Irish, go carved timber mezzanine with memorabilia, local artwork with people's messages, fantastic breakfasts and meals such as Dublin roast roll and rissoles with mash.

Green Pepper Pizza Café (☎ 5881 4177; Hardinge St; mains \$10-12; ☹ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat) Eat in this large café, or take away, sandwiches, schnitzels, pasta and pizzas.

Crossing Café (☎ 5881 7827; Peppin Heritage Centre; mains \$18-22; ☹ 9am-3pm daily, dinner Fri & Sat) It's like a chalet with an idyllic riverside setting, where wood-fired pizzas and fine local wines are featured. Weekend dinners include grilled blue-eye with sweet-chilli-and-lemonade sauce, while local bands add to the atmosphere.

G at Globe Hotel (☎ 5881 2030; 202 Cressy St; mains \$16-30; ☹ lunch & dinner) It's a bit dingy outside, then wow! Inside there are soaring pressed-tin ceilings, white tablecloths and fine food including classics such as scotch fillet topped with king prawns.

Getting There & Away

Long-distance buses stop on Whitelock St, opposite Gorman Park. **CountryLink** (☎ 13 22 42) buses run between Deniliquin and Wagga (\$51; 3½ hours; four days a week) or Al-

bury (\$29; 3½ hours; the other three days), both linking with the XPT train to Sydney (\$110; 10 hours). **V/Line** (☎ 13 61 96) coaches run daily between Deniliquin and Melbourne (\$37; four hours), stopping at Echuca (\$4; one hour). **Travelscene Deniliquin** (☎ 588 7744; tonta@mpx.com.au; 358 Cressy St) is the ticket agent.

WENTWORTH

☎ 03 / pop 7240

This charming historic river port nestles at the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers, shaded by stately river redgums. There are plenty of lookouts, self-guided walking tracks, a heritage drive trail and brilliant bike-riding and bird-watching opportunities. The **visitors centre** (☎ 5027 3624; www.wentworth.nsw.gov.au; 66 Darling St; ☹ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun) is on the main road.

Local history is displayed at the **Old Wentworth Gaol** (☎ 5027 3327; Beverley St; adult \$6; ☹ 10am-5pm), the first colonial Australian-design gaol. Across the road in the **Rotary Folk Museum** (adult \$2; ☹ 10am-4pm, closed Sat) there is a large collection of photos of the paddle-steamers that once made this a major port, and replicas of the mega fauna that once roamed the area.

The **Perry Dunes** are stunning orange-red sand dunes that date back 40,000 years. They're just 6km north of town, off the road to Broken Hill. Go bananas, running up the 200 hectares of rolling sand, but keep your eyes peeled as you roll back down as fossils of mega fauna have been found.

Harry Nanya Tours (☎ 1800 630 864; www.harrynanyatours.com.au; 33 Darling St) runs day and sunset tours (adult/child \$130/85 including meals) with Aboriginal guides into Mungo National Park (p273).

Sleeping & Eating

Wombat Lodge Backpackers (☎ 0439 808 217; 162 Darling St; dm \$15) This is the spot for some home comforts and lots of information. The small timber home mostly features lounges, a kitchen and sitting areas while most of the bedrooms are out back in the garden.

Sportsmans Inn Motel (☎ 5027 3584; 120 Adams St; s/d \$55/65; ☹) It's a favourite with travellers, who pass through Wentworth regularly for the no-fuss value you get at this typical red-brick 1960s motel built around a central courtyard. The rooms are spacious, the owners delightful and it's a pleasant walk to the centre.

Wentworth Grande Resort (☎ 5027 2225; wentworthresort@bigpond.com; 61-79 Darling St; std/deluxe from \$110/135; ☹) Situated on the banks of the Murray at its junction with the Darling, this resort offers glorious river views from many of its modern rooms. Others overlook the pool or tropical garden. It has golf, tennis, a gym, and houseboats to hire.

Crown Hotel (☎ 5027 3061; 52 Darling St; mains \$10-18; ☹ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) A friendly family pub. Start with the pea-and-ham soup. It's perfect, and you'll hear no complaints about the home-cooked schnitzels or roasts either. On Thursday nights, there's a \$5 dinner and pool comp.

Staying on a houseboat is popular. The boats accommodate from six to eight people. Expect to pay from \$950 for three nights on a six-berth boat. The visitors centre has a complete listing of boat operators.

Getting There & Around

Most long-distance buses run through Mildura. **Coomoellan Bus Lines** (☎ 5027 4704) runs to Mildura (\$5, three times daily), from the Post Office corner. If you'll be driving on unmade roads, call **Road Condition Info** (☎ 5027 5090).

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'