



Outback New South Wales

New South Wales (NSW) is rarely credited for its far-west outback corner, but it should be. Out here, grey saltbush and red sand make it easy to imagine yourself superimposed onto the world's biggest Aboriginal dot painting, a canvas reaching as far as the eye can see.

Bathurst

POP 31,294

Bathurst is Australia's oldest inland settlement, boasting a cool climate and a beautiful manicured central square where formidable Victorian buildings transport you to the past. And then, in a dramatic change of pace, it's also the bastion of Australian motor sport.

Sights

Ask at the visitor centre for information about wineries, hiking trails and scenic drives in the region.

★ Australian Fossil & Mineral Museum

MUSEUM

(www.somervillecollection.com.au; 224 Howick St; adult/child \$12/6; ☉10am-4pm Mon-Sat, to 2pm Sun) Don't let the dry name fool you – this place is a treasure chest full of wonder. It's home to the internationally renowned Somerville Collection: rare fossils, plus gemstones and minerals in every colour of the rainbow. The museum also houses Australia's only complete *Tyrannosaurus rex* skeleton.

Courthouse

HISTORIC BUILDING, MUSEUM

(www.bathursthistory.org.au; Russell St; museum adult/child \$4/2.50; ☉museum 10am-4pm Tue-Sat, 11am-2pm Sun) This 1880 building is the most impressive of Bathurst's historical structures. Its east wing houses the small **Historical Museum**.

Mt Panorama

LANDMARK

(www.mount-panorama.com.au) **FREE** Rev-heads will enjoy the 6.2km **Mt Panorama Motor Racing Circuit**, venue for the epic Bathurst 1000 V8 race each October (which sees crowds of up to 200,000). It's a public road, so you can drive around the circuit – but only up to an unthrilling 60km/h.

National Motor Racing Museum

MUSEUM

(www.nmrm.com.au; Murrays Corner, Mt Panorama; adult/child \$12.50/5.50; ☉9am-4.30pm) Sits at the base of Mt Panorama and celebrates all things motor sports.

★★ Festivals & Events

Bathurst 1000

MOTOR RACING

(www.v8supercars.com.au; ☉Oct) Petrol-heads throng to Bathurst for this 1000km touring-car race, considered the pinnacle of Australian motor sport. It's completed over 161 laps of Mt Panorama.

Sleeping

Jack Duggans Irish Pub

PUB \$

(☎02-6331 2712; www.jackduggans.com.au; 135 George St; dm/s/d with shared bathroom \$30/50/65) This lively spot in the heart of town has a good restaurant and bar downstairs (run by a real Irishman, with live music on weekends and good *craic*). Upstairs are small, high-quality budget rooms.

Accommodation

Warehouse

APARTMENTS \$\$

(☎ 02-6332 2801; www.accomwarehouse.com.au; 121a Keppel St; s/d \$100/130; 🏠🚶) A three-level woollen mill dating from the 1870s has been cleverly converted into these five self-contained apartments. They're not slick; they're sweet and cosy and have considerably more character than a modern motel room. It's down a lane, arrowed off Keppel St.

Rydges Mount Panorama

HOTEL \$\$

(☎ 02-6338 1888; www.rydges.com/bathurst; 1 Conrod Straight; r from \$150; 🏠🚶) Large (129 studios and apartments) and smartly furnished, with loads of facilities. Every room has a view over the racetrack, but you'll need to book well ahead for the Bathurst 1000.



Eating & Drinking

Church Bar

PIZZA \$\$

(1 Ribbon Gang Lane; pizzas \$17-25; 🕒 noon-midnight) This restored 1850s church now attracts punters praying to a different deity: the god of wood-fired pizza. The soaring ceilings and verdant courtyard off William St make it one of the town's best eating and socialising venues.

Hub

CAFE \$\$

(52 Keppel St; mains \$13-25; 🕒 7am-5pm Mon-Sat, to 3pm Sun) On a strip with a few cool cafe options, the courtyard canopy of red umbrellas and green leaves makes this popular spot the perfect place for an alfresco meal.

Webb & Co

BAR

(www.webbandco.com.au; off George St; 🕒 3pm-late Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Tucked down a central arcade (next to Crema coffee bar), this classy 'beverage emporium' proffers great craft beer, cocktails and local wine, plus a most excellent menu of share plates, mains (\$26) and grazing feasts.



Information

Visitor Centre (☎ 02-6332 1444; www.visitbathurst.com.au; Kendall Ave; 🕒 9am-5pm)

Mudgee

POP 9830

Mudgee is a pretty little pocket of New South Wales, surrounded by vineyards and rolling hills. Wineries and excellent food make Mudgee a lovely spot to relax and refuel.



Sights

Mudgee's 35 cellar doors (all family-owned operations) are primarily clustered north-east of town. Get details from the visitor centre: some vineyards have outstanding restaurants, some have accommodation, some open weekends only.

★Lowe Wines

WINERY

(☎ 03-6372 0800; www.lowewine.com.au; Tinja Lane; 🕒 10am-5pm) You can follow a walking/cycling trail through the orchards and vines of this idyllic organic farm, past donkeys and chickens to picnic grounds. The cellar door has tastings and a superb grazing platter (\$30) of local flavours, and Zin House (p106) is on the grounds. Check the website for events, too.

Logan Wines

WINERY

(www.loganwines.com.au; 33 Castlereagh Hwy; 🕒 10am-5pm) An impressive and modern cellar-door experience 15km east of Mudgee.

Pieter van Gent Winery & Vineyard

WINERY

(www.pvgwinery.com.au; 141 Black Springs Rd; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-4pm Sun) Heavenly white port and muscat, and tastings in a photogenic oak-barrel room.

Robert Stein Winery & Vineyard

WINERY

(www.robertstein.com.au; Pipeclay Lane; 🕒 10am-4.30pm) A small, rustic cellar door plus a vintage motorcycle museum (free). There's also an excellent paddock-to-plate restaurant, Pipeclay Pumphouse.

di Lusso Estate

WINERY

(www.dilusso.com.au; 162 Eurunderee Lane; 🕒 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, to 4pm Sun) Play bocce, taste-test home-grown olives and figs, eat pizza and sample Italian wine varietals (nebbiolo, sangiovese etc) at this sweet slice of Italy.



Sleeping

Mudgee Riverside

Tourist Park

CAMPGROUND, CABINS \$

(☎ 02-6372 2531; www.mudgeeriverside.com.au; 22 Short St; sites \$24-31, cabins from \$90; 🏠) Super-central, leafy and well run.

★Perry Street Hotel

BOUTIQUE HOTEL \$\$

(☎ 02-6372 7650; www.perrystreethotel.com.au; cnr Perry & Gladstone Sts; ste from \$165; 🏠🚶) Stunning apartment suites make a sophisticated choice in town. The attention to detail is outstanding, right down to the kimono bathrobes, Nespresso machine and free gourmet snacks.