

# Gulgong

SMALL TOWN. BIG FINDS.

A FAMILY'S 3-DAY GUIDE



# Gulgong

**WIRADJURI WORD: GOOL-GOONG**

**GOOL: BEND OR CROOKED**

**GONG: NOISY WATER**

Just over 4 hours drive from Sydney, via the beautiful Blue Mountains and 20-minute drive north of Mudgee, you'll find us - **Gulgong** (it's pronounced GULL-gong, by the way... Gull rhymes with hull).

We're known as the Ten Dollar Town and immortalised on Australia's former \$10 note. We're a town who wears its past with pride. Here, history isn't just displayed in museums, it is woven into every crooked street, every character-filled building and every warm "G'day" you'll get along the way.

You'll see it in the UNESCO-listed Holtermann photograph collection that captures pioneering Australia in extraordinary detail. You'll hear it in the words of Henry Lawson still echoing through town. Step inside the oldest operating opera house in the Southern Hemisphere and you can almost hear Dame Nellie Melba take the stage once more. And if you look closely, even the streets reveal their secrets, with symbols from a forgotten travellers' language etched into the pavement.

But the real big finds aren't just written in the history books. They're in the unexpected moments, a hidden boutique, a character-filled pub, a conversation that turns into a story you'll retell long after you leave.

What really makes this place special is our people. The welcome is genuine, the smiles come easy, and the sense of community is something you don't just see, you feel it. You won't just pass through... you'll feel like you belong.

Here we welcome you to slow down, wander and just breathe.



Gulgong



Prince of Wales Hotel



Gulgong Holtermann Museum

# Gulgong

## FAST FACTS

### WHERE IS GULGONG?

- ▶ 295km Northwest of Sydney – around 4-hour drive
- ▶ 30km North of Mudgee – around 23-minute drive

### SMALL TOWN > BIG HEARTS

- ▶ Population: 2,057
- ▶ Land Size: 110 km<sup>2</sup> of Wiradjuri country

### EXPECT TO MEET

- ▶ A town of proud locals who LOVE a yarn
- ▶ Volunteers who are so passionate about sharing the historical stories
- ▶ Creators and collectors of unusual things

### SEASONAL SNAPSHOT

- ▶ Average highs/lows:
  - ▶ Summer 31°C / 15°C
  - ▶ Autumn 23°C / 9°C
  - ▶ Winter 15°C / 2°C
  - ▶ Spring 23°C / 8°C
- ▶ Average Rainfall: 650mm per year

### THE LAY OF THE LAND

- ▶ Part of the Mudgee Region: Mudgee, Rylstone, Kandos
- ▶ Elevation: 475m above sea level. *Cool temperate characterised by four distinct seasons.*

### WHAT DRIVES GULGONG

- ▶ **Key Industries:** Tourism & Hospitality, Agriculture & Livestock, Mining, Renewable Energy



# Who's This Itinerary For?



📍 Gulgong Pioneers Museum

## THE ACTIVE FAMILY

**Your Vibe:** You've made the call, it's time to get everyone out of the house, out of the city and somewhere that keeps the kids (and the big kids) properly entertained.

**Your motivation:** School holidays and long weekends roll around... and suddenly you're hearing "I'm bored" on repeat. Screens are getting a little too much airtime, and you're ready to swap them for something a bit more hands-on.

This one is for families who like to get amongst it.

**Think:** engaging, hands-on experiences, short break that mixes fun with a little learning, and plenty of ways for everyone to join in. It's about exploring, discovering, and making memories together, without it ever feeling like a lesson.

Because sometimes, the best kind of quality time is the kind where everyone's actually enjoying themselves.



📍 Gulgong Holtermann Museum

# In Gulgong, Small Really is the New Big.



📍 Owl Head Lodge

## WHAT YOU WILL LOVE

In a nation that loves to go big, Gulgong is unapologetically small, and that's exactly the point. Our size is our superpower. We're the antidote to the big city rush, where weekends feel more intimate, unhurried, and genuinely personal.

You still get the good stuff, great food, local wine, but with space for the kids to roam, explore, and (finally) forget about their devices for a while.

It's not about big-ticket attractions or jam-packed itineraries. It's about ease. Space. And those simple moments that don't feel rushed or over planned, the ones that actually make a big impact.

## WHY YOU MATTER, WHY TOURISM MATTERS

The moment you roll into Gulgong, you're welcomed like part of the family. Locals love to say "G'day", pull you into a yarn in the streets, cafes, or pubs, and share the stories that make this town so special.

Most of the experiences, shops and hospitality venues are run by locals and their families, who generally love what they do. Many even volunteer their time to bring the town's pioneering history to life in playful, interactive ways. They want the stories of Gulgong to be passed down, remembered and celebrated.

Your visit matters. Every smile, every chat, every experience you enjoy, and every dollar you spend helps a small community keep its heart beating strong.

Gooree Park

# Day One



## MORNING

Bundle the kids into the car, pop a Taylor Swift-stacked playlist on, and start the 4-hour road trip from Sydney via the Bells Line of Road. Take it slow on the way, pull over at [Bilpin's](#) orchard gates, grab something fresh and juicy, and make a mandatory stop at [Pie in the Sky Roadhouse](#) (no arguments). Before you know it, the city streets fade into bushland and open paddocks, easing you into the slower rhythm that defines a [Gulgong](#) family weekend away.



Gooree Park



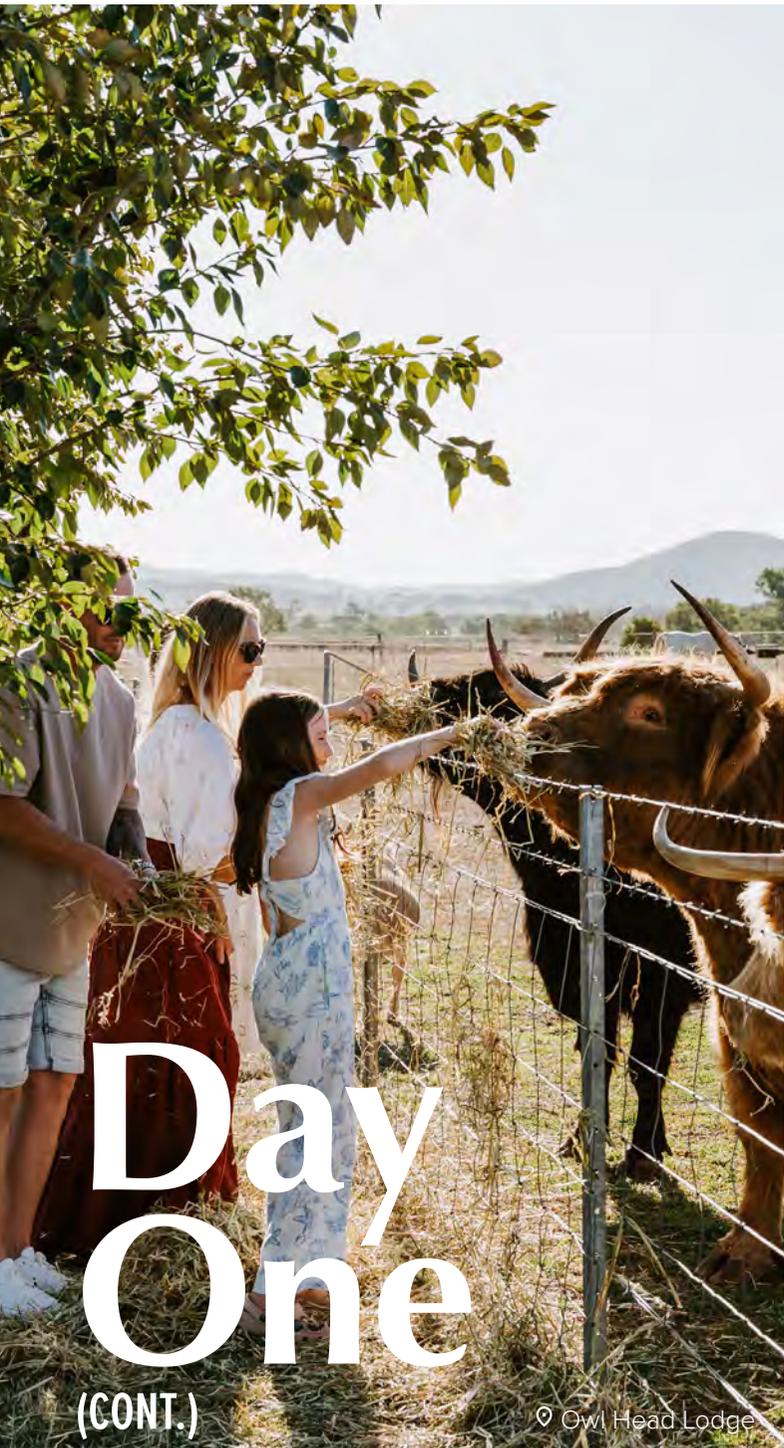
Gooree Park

## AFTERNOON

As you roll into Mudgee, you're only 10 minutes away from your first Gulgong stop, and it couldn't come at a better time. Lunch is calling.

Pull in at [Gooree Park](#), a historic working farm where world-class horse racing meets award-winning wine. Settle into the beautifully restored stables where horse breeding tradition meets cellar door innovation. Enjoy a relaxed tasting and bite to eat from [Mally's Kitchen](#), while the kids make a beeline for the lawn, think giant jenga, totem tennis and plenty of space to run free.

Once everyone's refueled, stretch the legs on a behind-the-scenes [Stud Tour](#), saying hello to the resident champion horses (Prized Icon loves his carrots) and the friendly, doe-eyed cows along the way – a true taste of country life. Before you leave, stock up on wagyu, wine, beer and local goodies from the Gooree Pantry, perfect for an easy dinner later.



# Day One

(CONT.)

📍 Owl Head Lodge



📍 Owl Head Lodge

With the car a little fuller (in the best way), make your way to Gulgong and pull up at **Owl Head Lodge**, just 10 minutes down the road, your weekend HQ. Set among rolling hills, this 4.5-star rural retreat blends comfort with calm country (music to any busy parent's ears). Cozy fireplaces and a sparkling pool for warmer days.

Then there's the unofficial welcoming committee: a gentle herd of Highland cattle and a few curious goats, eager for a snack. Hand-feeding them quickly becomes a highlight for kids, and adults too, proving that the simplest moments make the best memories. "Gucci" the designer breed goat is a favourite, along with his mate "Buddy", but "Archie" the Highland Bull and his crew "Opal" and "Macey", tend to steal the show.

## EVENING

Later that night, take it slow and fire up the BBQ. Sink into the golden glow of sunset over Wiradjuri Country, with birdsong and cicadas as your soundtrack. There's no rush, no schedule, just the kids toasting marshmallows over the fire pit, their laughter mixing with the crackle of the flames, while you kick back and soak in the calm. Here, there's no city noise – just space, stars, and the kind of quiet that makes memories stick for a lifetime.



📍 Owl Head Lodge



📍 Gulgong Pioneers Museum

## MORNING

Kids are up early to the cheerful calls of kookaburras, the perfect cue to kick-start the day. Head to **Beryl's Café** for a big brekkie and a coffee surrounded by friendly locals and quirky community art exhibitions. It's a local favourite that feels like a warm hug.

Once fueled up, step outside onto the streets and the kids are suddenly in a living history lesson. With heritage buildings and iron-verandah shopfronts all around, it's easy to picture gold miners tying up their horses, pickaxes in hand, before ducking into the local pub for a pint. Keep an eye on the footpaths for carved symbols, a playful **secret travellers' language** once used by the Gypsies of Europe and carried on by the Aussie Swaggies.



📍 Gulgong Pioneers Museum



📍 Wear It Out

Just a short stroll from the main street is a visit to the **Gulgong Pioneer Museum**, where retro nostalgia meets hands-on play. Voted the fourth-best history museum in NSW, it's your ticket to the Aussie pioneer days. Kids can tinker with old tools, explore rooms full of pioneer life, and see how settlers cooked, crafted, and built everything from scratch.

Keep the discoveries going as you explore Gulgong's local shopping scene. Let the kids forage through **Stacks Down Under**, hunting for colourful toys, quirky crafts and gadgets that make them giggle with excitement. Mum can shop her next favourite outfit at **Wear It Out**, while Dad embarks on a treasure hunt through the string of second-hand shops, looking for something to claim as his next "pool room masterpiece."

Everyone can marvel at the creations at **The Gallery Gulgong**, a co-operative of local artists showcasing hand-crafted works, from pottery and woodwork to photography, candles, preserves and jewellery. Big or small, serious or silly, there's a Gulgong souvenir for all.



Stroll past the [Prince of Wales Opera House](#) for another photo opp. It's more than just a good-looking historic building, it's also the oldest opera house still in operation in the southern hemisphere – you can even score a sneak peek inside!

Then it's time to put your feet up and refuel at the [Prince of Wales Hotel](#). Serving guests since 1872, this pub is packed with old-world charm, quirky memorabilia, and a warm country welcome you can feel the moment you walk in. Polished timber, vintage signs and shelves brimming with curiosities set the scene for a truly quirky, old-world atmosphere. This is where locals have been spinning yarns for generations, and now you get to pull up a chair and join in.

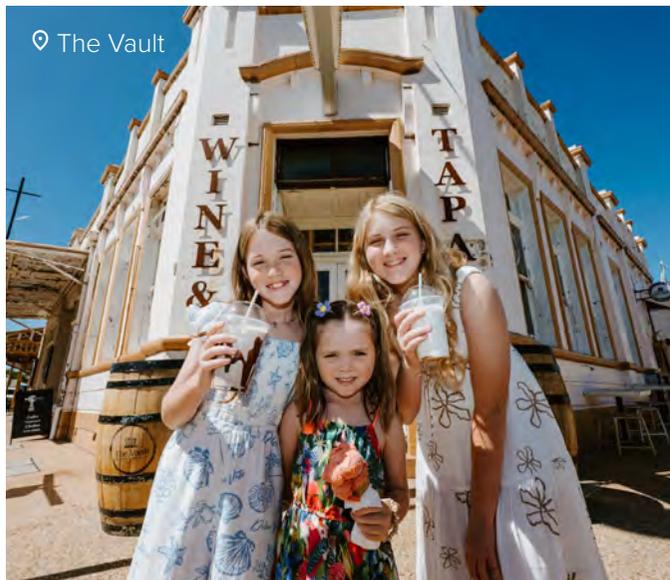


Photo time! Strike a pose in front of the [Henry Lawson street art](#), painted by local artist Sam Paine as a colourful tribute to Aussie storytelling. Inspired by Lawson's short story *The Loaded Dog*, the mural gives a cheeky nod to his life and work and makes a perfect backdrop for a family snap.

As one of the homes of the Lawson family, Gulgong continues to celebrate Henry's legacy with the annual [Henry Lawson Heritage Festival](#) each June long weekend. Think kids' activities, bush dancing (we can almost hear the docey doe-ing from here!), poetry readings, and a lively street parade, all wrapped up in stories, laughs, and Aussie spirit. Definitely a date to mark for your next visit!





# Day Two

(CONT.)

## AFTERNOON

You can't miss a stop at [Gulgong Holtermann Museum](#), starting with its iconic heritage facade. The charm doesn't stop at the exterior, step inside for a self-guided tour through interactive galleries and life-sized exhibits. The photograph collection captures Gulgong at the peak of the gold rush and is now UNESCO-listed, making it worth a visit even just for the bragging rights. Back outside, the kids will love the narrated Interactive Street Trail, following the audio to link historic images to the real heritage buildings around town. Very cool!

Afterwards, put the gold life lessons to the real world with the [Gulgong Gold Experience](#), which features a replica underground mining tunnel and original

mine shaft. The kids can pan for actual gold (don't quit your day job just yet!), before enjoying afternoon tea at [The Miner's Cottage Tea Rooms](#). Located in a renovated old miner's cottage, it's the perfect setting to enjoy tea served in English china and scones just like nana used to make.



📍 Gulgong Holtermann Museum



📍 Gulgong Gold Experience

## EVENING

Dinner calls, and your family will be stoked with woodfired pizzas and tapas plates at [The Vault](#), which doubles as a wine bar (you're welcome mum and dad!) and a sweet spot for gelato, so dessert is definitely on the table. Sample the local wine or brews, or sip on a classic cocktail. While everyone digs in, enjoy relaxed, flavour-packed dining where both little appetites and grown-up tastes are well looked after.

Then it's time to head back to Owl Head Lodge, where the night sky comes alive with stars. Lie back, point out constellations with the kids, and let the calm of the countryside wash over you. With full tummies and happy hearts, it's the perfect time for some well-earned sleep before another day of Gulgong adventures.



# Day Three

📍 Gulgong Adventure Playground

## MORNING

Sundays are for lazy mornings. Fire up the BBQ for a cooked brekkie, pack at a leisurely pace, and let the kids say a fond farewell to our four-legged friends in the paddock: Archie, Opal and Macey the Highland Cattle, and Gucci and Buddy the goats.

Next, it's off to the **Gulgong Adventure Playground**, the one every local talks about. Let the kids run free! Toddlers will love the sandpit, slides and see-saw, while the older kids can test their skills on the flying fox and giant swing.

Fuel up for the final adventure with coffee, milkshakes, and picnic supplies from **Cobb's Bakery Café & Takeaway**, then head to **The Drip** walking track. This cruisy 2.8km return trail along the Goulburn River is perfect for families, with dripping sandstone formations, towering eucalypts and plenty of wildlife to spot along the way.

Let the kids linger a little longer, spotting birds and chasing sunlight through the trees, while you take a last slow breath of Gulgong's countryside.

After three magical days in Gulgong, with little feet running, laughter in the air and memories made together, you'll head home with happy hearts.

You see, in our small town, the little moments leave the biggest impact.



AND AS HENRY LAWSON ONCE WROTE

“There’s a kind of peace in the bush that stays with a man longer after he’s gone”

**MUDGEES  
REGION**  
TOURISM