

Central Darling Region

Ivanhoe, Mossgiel, Wilcannia, Menindee, White Cliffs and Tilpa

The Central Darling Region covers the largest area of any local government area in NSW with over 53,000 square kilometres. Although it has a small population the region is renowned for its hospitality and its amazing array of fauna and flora. The region is the gateway to Mungo National Park, Broken Hill and Outback NSW.



Central Darling Region at a glance

Towns and Villages: Ivanhoe, Mossgiel, Wilcannia, Menindee, White Cliffs and Tilpa

Population: 2,000

Main Industries: Sheep, Cattle, Horticulture, Mining and Tourism

River: The Darling

National Parks: Mungo, Paroo Darling and Willandra

Did you know?

Australia's first commercial opal field was established at White Cliffs in 1894

Events

April - White Cliffs Gymkhana and Rodeo

June - Ivanhoe Campdraft

August - Ivanhoe Quick Shear

October - Kilfera Field Days (Ivanhoe)

Must See and Dos

- ✓ Discover the Sandstone Architecture in Wilcannia (post office and its attached residence, the Athenaeum Library (1883) and the impressive courthouse (1880), police station (1881), and the police residence (1880).
- ✓ Visit the traditional craftsmen in Wilcannia.
- ✓ Learn about the history of Ivanhoe - follow the Heritage Trail and check out the mural 'The Pioneers'.
- ✓ Revel in the landscape at any one of a number of National Parks in the region.
- ✓ Spend the quietest, darkest night of your life underground at a Bed and Breakfast or motel at White Cliffs.



Central Darling Shire

Reid Street, Wilcannia NSW 2836

Phone: 08 8083 8910

Website: www.centraldarling.nsw.gov.au

Ivanhoe

Born through hard work and determination, Ivanhoe represents the classic outback pastoral town. Through tough times and good, flood and crippling drought, towns like Ivanhoe have earned their place in Australia's history.

History

Ivanhoe was originally situated on a well-used route across western New South Wales between Wilcannia and both Balranald and Booligal. George Williamson purchased the first land in the area between 1869 and 1873 and became a central figure in the town's development. He established a branch store with a liquor licence in 1870. At that stage the store and a bark hut constituted the town. The Ivanhoe Hotel came into existence by 1872 and a Post Office opened on January 1, 1874.

Williamson probably named the town after Sir Walter Scott's novel 'Ivanhoe'. Williamson was a Scot and there were a number of his countrymen in the area. They looked to their country of origin (and its most famous novelist) for other local place names - Mossgiel, Glenro, Waverley (another novel by Scott) and Abbotsford (Scott's birthplace).

A telegraph station opened in 1883, by which time there were about 50 residents, a blacksmith's shop, two hotels, two stores, the telegraph office and a few cottages. By 1884, the town was a horse changing station for Cobb & Co. A police station opened the following year and a school in 1889. Ivanhoe was proclaimed a village in 1890. The arrival of the railway in 1925, and the completion of the rail link from Sydney to Broken Hill in 1927, was a definite boost to the town.

Attractions

A good introduction to the town can be had by following the eight signposted locations on the Ivanhoe Heritage Trail.



Wilcannia

When you spend a few minutes taking in the historic buildings around Wilcannia you can quickly imagine the rich and vibrant history of this town. Once known as the 'Queen City of the West', Wilcannia was one of the busiest inland ports and third largest port in Australia. During the 1880s boom years, sandstone was quarried to create the beautiful buildings that today remain as a reminder of that prosperous era.

History

Australia has been inhabited by the aboriginal people for some 40,000 years. Lake Mungo to the south of Wilcannia and Mootwingi to the north-west give evidence of their long occupation. Because of this, the Aboriginal people have a unique place in our Australian society. The Central Darling area around Wilcannia was held by the Barkindji tribe, and many of the Aboriginal people living in Wilcannia today belong to that tribe. In 1835, Major Thomas Mitchell followed the Bogan and Darling rivers down to Menindee, during which trip he named Mt Murchison (later to become Wilcannia) on the Darling. Settlement along the river commenced prior to 1850, but it was 1855 before the Central Darling runs were consolidated.



Captain Francis Cadell's steamer 'Albury' entered the Darling at Wentworth on 27 January 1859 and reached Mt Murchison in eight days. The township of Wilcannia was notified on 26 June 1866. In 1880 it had a population of 3000 with 13 hotels and was known as 'the Queen City of the West'. Wilcannia became one of the major ports of the Murray Darling system. The paddle steamer trade flourished for 70 years. At the port of Wilcannia in 1887, 218 steamers and their barges unloaded stores weighing 36,170 tons, and 222 loaded wool and other produce weighing 26,552 tons.

In 1890, there were 90 steamers plying the Darling and at one time there were 30 steamers loading or unloading at Wilcannia. Eventually rail and road transport killed the river boats and Wilcannia lost much of its former glory. However, many fine buildings from its early days remain in good condition, making Wilcannia one of the best preserved historic towns in Australia.

Attractions

There are several fine traditional craftsmen and your visit may be an opportunity to purchase some of their arts and crafts. Wander around town and take in the magnificent sandstone buildings, centre lift bridge and old wharf.



White Cliffs

White Cliffs is a small mining town of 320 people located just 95km north of Wilcannia. This truly unique underground town is a must see for those who want to see the outback at its best. Stay underground to get a feeling of what it is like to be a local or wander around the unusual landscape – you might just find a gem.

Menindee

Menindee was the first town settled on the Darling River and is a mecca for bird watchers (there are more bird species here than in Kakadu NT). The area is known as the food bowl of the far west and produces citrus, orchards, stone fruit, grapes and vegetables. Stop and have a drink at the second oldest pub in NSW, the Maidens before visiting the famous Menindee Lakes. Bourke and Wills stayed here during their exploration of inland Australia.

Tilpa

For a true Outback experience you have to visit the Tilpa Pub on the Darling River. This 100-year old attraction, made from corrugated iron and timber has walls covered with the autographs, dry wit, and messages from the hundreds of people who stop there each year. For a small fee you can pen a message or poem too.

The fishing is also good - with plenty of Murray Cod on offer - while birds make their home around the riverbanks.



Central Darling Shire - Services

MENINDEE Accommodation

Albemarle Hotel
Menindee St. Ph: 08 8091 4162

Maidens Hotel
59 Yartla St. Ph: 08 8091 4208

Burke and Wills Motel
Yartla St. Ph: 08 8091 4406

Menindee Bridge Caravan Park
Wentworth Rd. Ph: 08 8091 4282

Menindee Lakes Caravan Park
Shore Rd. Ph: 08 8091 4315

Copi Hollow Caravan Park
Copi Hollow via Mendinee
Ph: 08 8091 4880

Bindara Station on the Darling
Tandou- Bindara Rd via Menindee
Ph: 08 8091 7412

Idle View Holiday Cabin
Sunset Strip via Menindee
Ph: 0428 881 437

Meals

Redsands Takeaway
Ph: 08 8091 4444

Maidens Hotel
Yartla St. Ph: 08 8091 4208

Albermarle Hotel
Menindee St. Ph: 08 8091 4212

Groceries, Fuel and other Services

Coombes Service Station
Perry St. Ph: 08 8091 4297

Menindee Auto Repairs
Yartla St. Ph: 08 8091 4458

Darling River Supermarket
Yartla St. Ph: 08 8091 4288

Nations Roadside Produce Stall
Wentworth Ivanhoe Road
Ph: 08 8091 4215

WILCANNIA Accommodation

Grahams Motel
Woore St. Ph: 08 8091 5040

Wilcannia Motel
Barrier H'way Ph: 08 8091 5802

Victory Park Caravan Park
Barrier H'way. Ph: 08 8091 5600

Meals

Wilcannia Roadhouse
Myer St. Ph: 08 8091 5957

Wilcannia Golf Club
Ross St. Ph: 08 8091 5943

Groceries, Fuel and other Services

Wilcannia Auto Repairs
Ph: 08 8091 5969

Wilcannia Roadhouse
Myer St. Ph: 08 8091 5957

BP Wilcannia
Reid St. Ph: 08 8091 5021

Wilcannia IGA
Ph: 08 8091 5989

Miss Barretts Coffee Shop
Ried St. Ph: 08 8091 5888

WHITE CLIFFS Accommodation and Meals

(* meals provided, bookings essential)

Opal Pioneer Tourist Park
Ph: 08 8091 6688

White Cliffs Underground Motel
Ph: 08 8091 6677 (*)

White Cliffs Hotel Motel
Ph: 08 8091 6606 (*)

Groceries, Fuel and other Services

**White Cliffs Store and Visitor
Information Centre**
Ph: 08 8091 6611

IVANHOE Accommodation

Ivanhoe Hotel
Ph: 02 6995 1102

Gypsum Palace Inn
Ph: 02 6995 1389

**Ivanhoe Service Station
(powered sites)**
Ph: 02 6995 1277

Meals

Ivanhoe RSL
Ph: 02 6995 1208

Loz's Coffee and Gifts
Ph: 02 6995 4838

Presso Café
Ph: 02 6995 1292

Groceries, Fuel and other services

Starpoint Grocery
Ph: 02 6995 1206

Ivanhoe Service Station
Ph: 02 6995 1277

TILPA Accommodation and Meals

Royal Hotel
Ph: 02 6837 3928

Killara Station
Ph: 02 6837 3964

