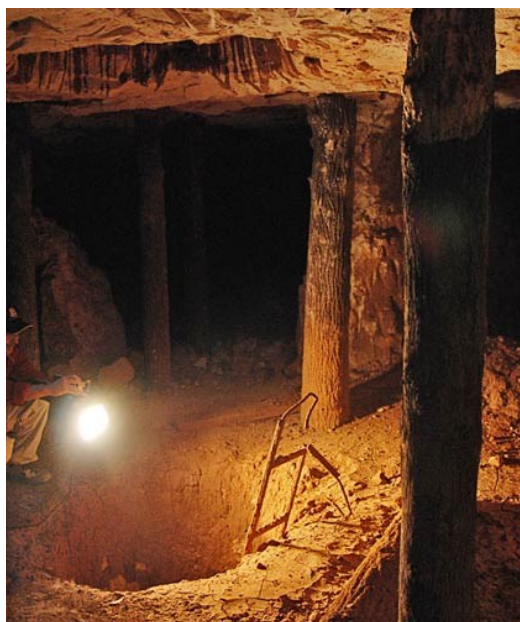


NEW SOUTH WALES LIGHTNING RIDGE

6 DAY COACH TOUR

Explore the outback landscapes of the Big Sky Country and Lightning Ridge. The area abounds with colourful characters, barrels of dreams and experiences! It's pioneering spirit ensures that many visitors become so enamoured with "The Ridge" that any stay turns into a lifetime of pleasure. Be captivated by this place, famous as a thriving frontier town full of the iconic Australian characters. Experience sculptures underground, antique lamps, castles, astronomy monuments, plus hills named 'Lunatic', 'Pig' and 'Bald'.



TOUR COST

Subject to numbers and date of departure

RESERVATIONS: 02 6297 8585

PO Box 37, Queanbeyan, NSW, 2620

1 Silva Avenue, Queanbeyan NSW 2620

Email: tours@pottertravel.com.au Web: www.pottertravel.com.au

Friends in Travel is trading as Potter Travel ABN 96 639 726 295

Day 1: DUBBO

Our journey this morning takes us to Orange which is surrounded by has some of the richest and most beautiful agricultural land in the whole of NSW. This afternoon we continue on to the historical village of Molong then through Wellington to Dubbo.

Day 2: LIGHTNING RIDGE

After breakfast we head north to Gilgandra, home of the Coo-ees and the Town of Windmills. In Bridge Street a plaque commemorates that starting point of the famous "Coo-ee" recruiting march of World War I. The beautiful St Ambrose Anglican Church is also in part a tribute to the march as well. From here we travel through Gulargambone, Coonamble and Walgett to Lightning Ridge. On our approach to "The Ridge", watch out for the newly erected Stanley – The Big Bird. Created by local artist John Murray, Stanley is an 18 metre tall emu made from scrap metal and old Volkswagen bodies and the odd discarded satellite dish. In classic waste to art fashion, everything has been scavenged, the bulk of the materials sourced by Stan Single, who donated the massive steel legs from the demolished Dubbo Police Station, as well as finding most of the VW bodies and parts. On arrival into Lightning Ridge we take a tour of the town. Lightning Ridge is the only place in Australia (and one of the few places in the world) where the precious and highly prized Black Opal is found. The black opal has carbon and iron oxide trace elements in it producing a very dark stone with hints of blue, green and red. We also make a visit to the Cactus Farm then settle into our motel.

Day 3: LIGHTNING RIDGE

After breakfast we head to the Lost Treasure Opal Mine to experience the atmosphere of an underground mine. We also have a tour including a video presentation and explanation about opal mining. We then visit the showroom to view the opals that came from the mines in this area. Next is a visit to the John Murray Art Gallery, well worth a visit. John has been kept busy adding to his mural on the outside wall of the Gallery, affectionately named "Billygoat Lane" (in reference to its original name). We now have some free time for lunch (own expense) before an afternoon visit to the Chambers of the Black Hand. Opened in April, 2007, this is a unique tourist mine. At 11.2m underground, local artist Ron Canlin has created the most amazing paintings and sculptures. There is The Last Supper, Archangel Gabriel and the Chinese Terracotta

Warriors. Ron is constantly carving new work, such as a samurai warrior so there are changes every day. The second level is a mine that has been worked for over 100 years, and all the old shafts and drives that were dug by the old timers are still there. On this level a geology tour will give us the different strata's opal formation – an experience not be missed. Overall, it is a very unique visit. Our last stop for the day is to meet our local opal expert at the Opal Cave. He will show us how the opal is cut and polished.

Day 4: GRAWIN & SHEEPYARD OPAL FIELDS

No trip to Lightning Ridge would be complete without a trip to the Grawin**. We'll collect our local guide and set out on our tour. We'll see interesting places like the Pub in the Scrub, the Glengarry Hilton and Sheeppark Flats. Located about 70km west of Lightning Ridge, the Grawin was established in 1908 with the discovery of the opal at "Hammond Hill". Further discoveries in 1920 at "Richards Hill" put the unofficial village on the map. It was at Grawin that the largest opal 'Light of the World' was found in 1928. Since the first discovery of opal in the region, people have come and gone in tides with each new strike, seeking their fortune in search of the rainbow in the rock. It is believed that a field at Grawin was discovered in 1905 but it wasn't until the 1970s that it became a major field in its own right. The Mulga Rush, which began in 2000, is the biggest opal rush since the Coocoran was discovered in the early 1900s. The Sheeppark area was named after a fin of opal near the fence of the old Sheepparks. Our day also includes lunch at the Glengarry Hilton. After a great day we head back to Lightning Ridge with some time to freshen up and relax before dinner. ***Please note that this day is subject to road conditions.*

Day 5: COONABARABRAN

This morning we travel back through Coonamble then east into the Warrumbungle National Park. This mountain range juts abruptly from the expanse of inland plains, born of violent volcanic action some 13 million years ago. The National Park is home to hundreds of native animals and wildflowers bedeck the mountains and plain lands of the park. There is time to relax or take a walk before travelling onto Coonabarabran.

Day 6: HOME

After breakfast we farewell our hosts and head for home, travelling via Gulgong and Mudgee.