



Visitor guide

# Back o' Bourke

Nature hosts the best stories

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#NSWParks

## Back o' Bourke

The Back o' Bourke is an iconic Australian destination with vast spaces rich in natural heritage and human history. Attractions to enjoy include ancient rivers, Aboriginal and pastoral heritage, spectacular rock art and constantly changing plant life. Camp, drive or walk to explore this fascinating part of the outback. Visit one park or roam the lot, but don't miss the Back o' Bourke as there are four conservation reserves that embrace the area.

## The Darling River Run

The drive from Bourke to Wentworth is an unforgettable experience where you'll discover ancient rock formations, historic landmarks and plenty of wildlife. For more information specifically about the Darling River Run visit [www.thedarlingriverrun.com.au](http://www.thedarlingriverrun.com.au).



David Finnegan/DPIE



Toorale National Park. Michael Van Ewijk/DPIE

# Culgoa National Park

The Culgoa River is the keystone of Culgoa National Park, fringed by tall, shady river red gums. With the adjoining Culgoa Floodplain National Park in Queensland, the parks conserve a variety of plant and animal communities in this vital floodplain landscape.

The Murrawarri People have close ties with the park and historic Aboriginal settlements nearby. Pastoralists settled in the area in the 1850s and Culgoa National Park takes in seven of these former pastoral leases.

The park embraces claypans, lakes, dunes and gibber, as well as part of the largest intact coolabah floodplains in NSW. Other vegetation communities include woodlands of gidgee and brigalow, rare native grasslands, white cypress pine and chenopod shrublands.

A key attraction of this park is the highly visible wildlife. Mobs of red kangaroos, western grey kangaroos, eastern grey kangaroos and emus are a common and thrilling sight. The 170 species of native birds include a variety of noisy parrots and many waterbirds. Reptiles and amphibians are also abundant. Twelve plants of conservation significance and 13 threatened animals have been recorded in the park, including the Australian bustard, koalas, stripe-faced dunnarts, red-tailed black-cockatoos, freckled ducks and brolgas.

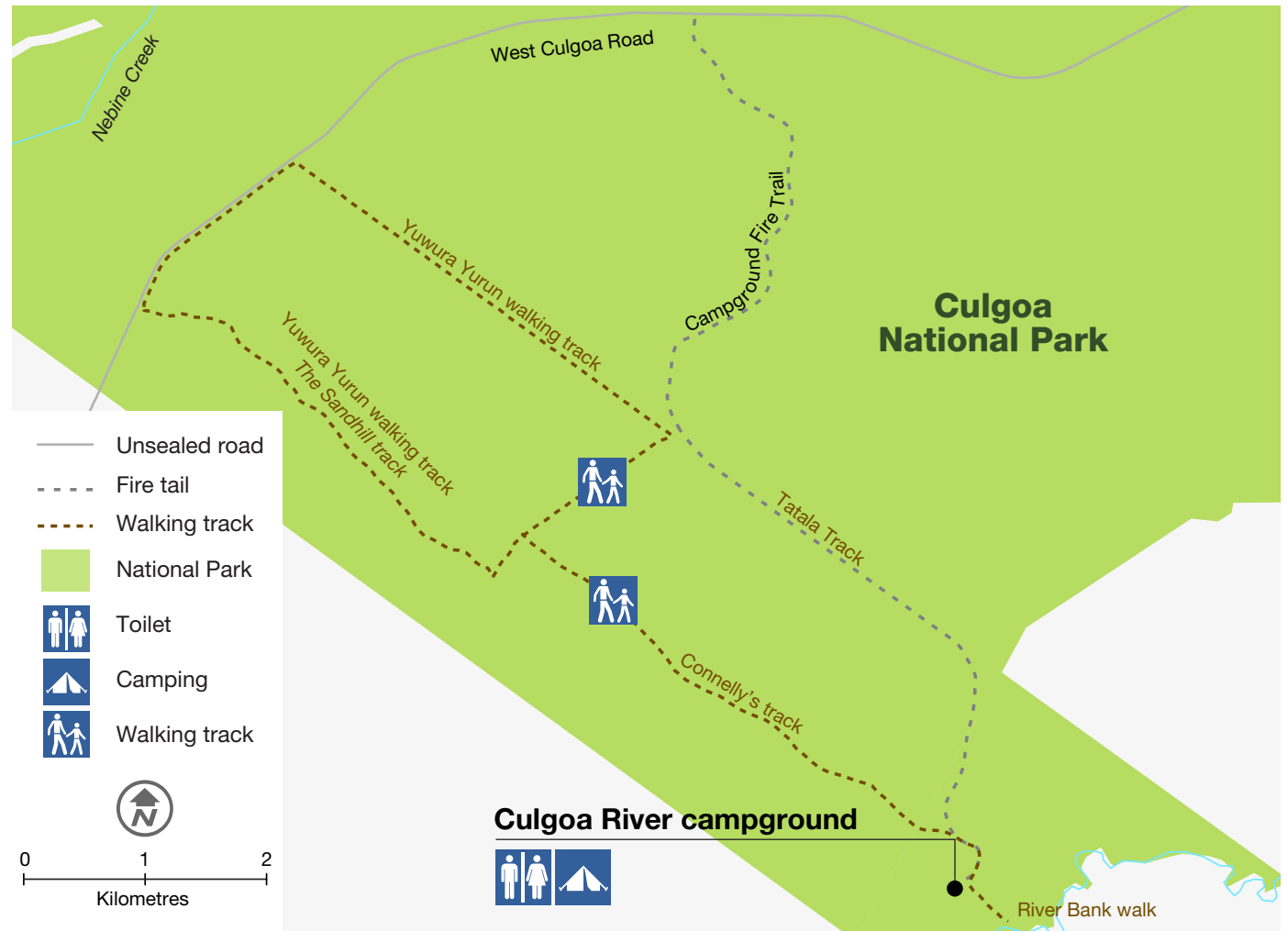
**Access:** Bourke to Culgoa NP: travel along the sealed road to Brewarrina and head north towards Weilmoringle. The unsealed road commences at Birrie River, where you will continue through Weilmoringle before turning right onto West Culgoa Road.

## Culgoa walks

**Mirri Mirri Yuran (The River Bank walk):** This delightful easy yet uneven walk is an easy 1.7km return. Meander under majestic river red gums along the banks of the Culgoa River. Start from the campground, via the picnic area.

### Connollys Track:

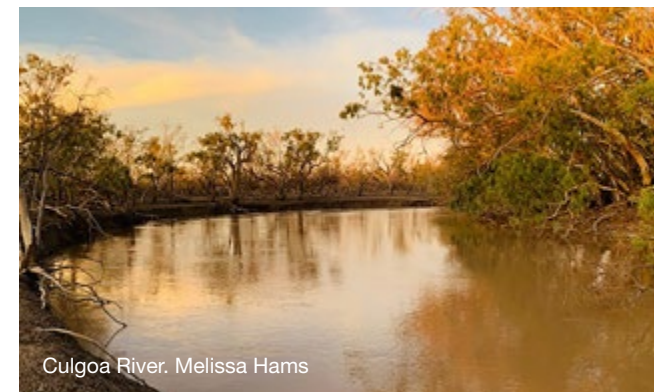
This 8km return walk wanders through open coolabah woodlands, allowing access between Yawura Yurun and the campground.



**Yawura Yurun (The Sandhill Track):** A great place to see carpets of colourful wildflowers after spring rains, on a 10km circuit walk through open cypress pine woodlands and traverses a low sandhill. It will take about 4 hours.

## Waking up in Culgoa

Culgoa River campground is an ideal resting place for well-equipped, independent travellers, with picnic tables and several short walks close by.



Culgoa River. Melissa Hams



## Nocoleche Nature Reserve

Nocoleche Nature Reserve was created to protect a nationally important network of river channels, wetlands and floodplains. Visitors are welcome at the King Charlie picnic area (20km south of Wanaaring) where you can enjoy picnicking and fishing on the banks of the Paroo River at King Charlie waterhole.

Nocoleche is Baakandji and Budjiti country. The Paroo River runs through the centre of the reserve and once formed a meeting ground. It remains one of a few rivers in the Murray-Darling Basin that has little or no interference with its natural flow. Wetlands within the reserve depend on floods from the Paroo River system and the Cuttaburra Creek which touches the eastern boundary.

The wetlands are important breeding and feeding ground for large populations of waterbirds. Recorded native fauna includes 176 bird species, 17 mammals, 37 reptiles, 15 frogs and five types of fish. Vast woodlands and shrublands spread across the channels, floodplains, sandplains and low stony tablelands.

**Access:** 210km west of Bourke, 250km east of Tibooburra and 20km south of Wanaaring along the Wilcannia road (Main Road 429, unsealed). Public access to the King Charlie waterhole picnic area.



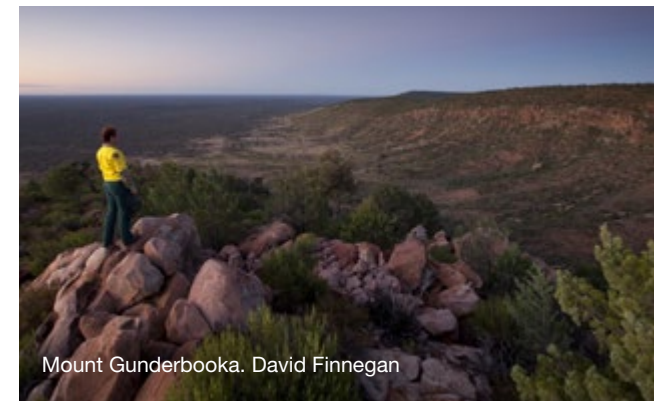
## Gundabooka National Park & State Conservation area

Gundabooka National Park is an area rich in Aboriginal and pioneer heritage that stretches from the banks of the Darling River, to the summit of Mount Gundabooka and across the vast floodplains of the Darling River.

Climb rugged Mount Gundabooka, rising 500 metres above the plains, enjoy the endless view and understand why this majestic mesa is of such great significance to the local Ngemba and Baakandji Aboriginal People. Gentler walking tracks will take you on an exploration of the woodlands and red sand dunes of the plains, including the spectacular Mulgowan (Yappa) Aboriginal rock art site. Enjoy the show as you watch Mount Gundabooka changing colour in the background at sunset.

Vegetation is as varied as the landscape within the park. Tall and shady river red gums follow the banks of the Darling River and other watercourses. This gives way to undulating woodland plains that come alive in spring with flowering shrubs such as emu bush, mulga and the majesty of bimblebox and western red box. Stop to listen to the wind rustling through the leaves of these woodlands. Ironwood and belah communities occupy the northern plains, with mulga, white cypress pine and grey mallee on the hills.

**Access:** Off the sealed Kidman Way 50km south of Bourke and 110km north of Cobar. 2WD access is available via dry weather roads within the park.



## Waking up in Gundabooka National Park

(online payment only)

**Yanda campground:** is surrounded by majestic river redgums on the banks of the Darling River and is set off the beaten track. The site is located on the river midway between Louth and Bourke on the Bourke-Wilcannia Road.

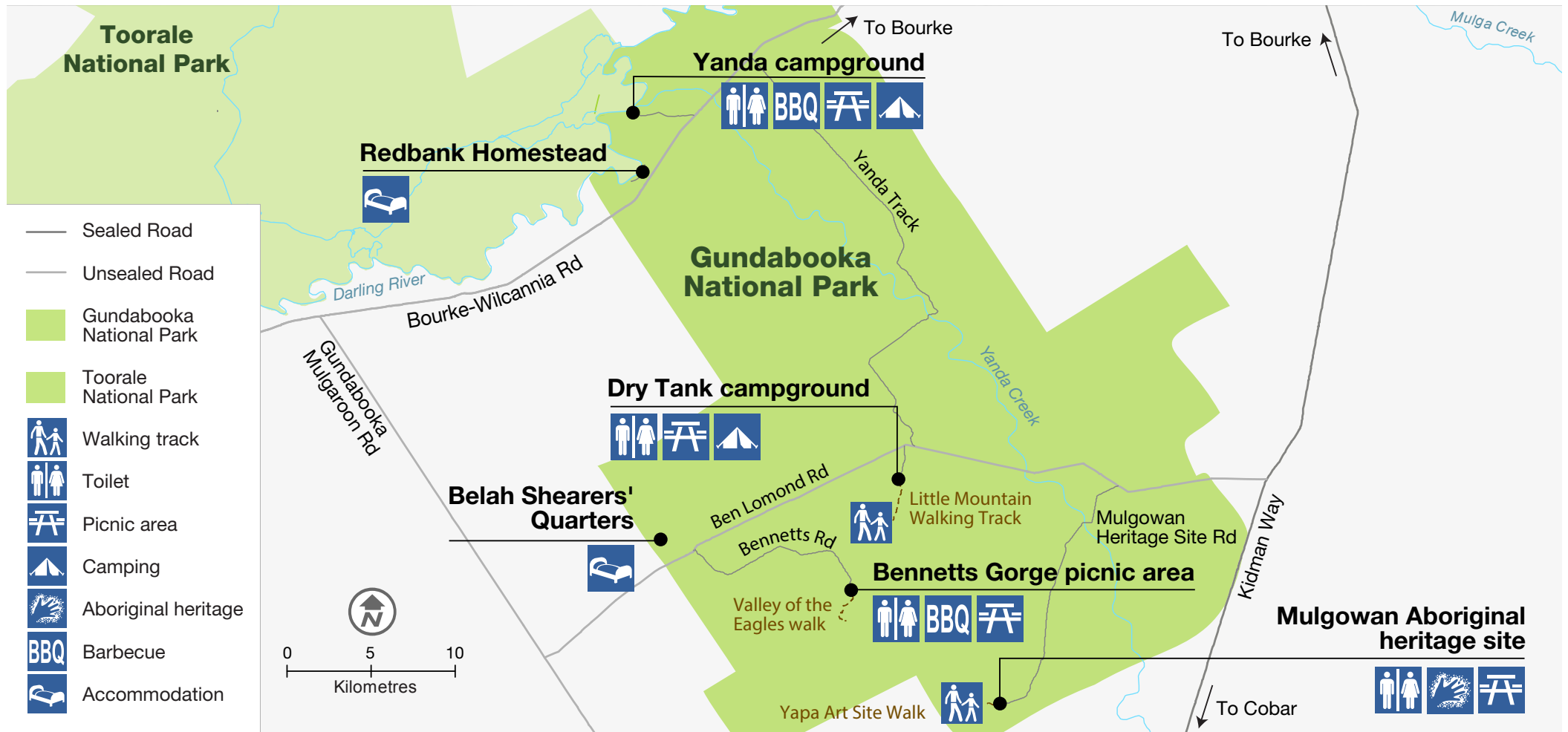
**Dry Tank campground:** this campsite is a terrific base from which to explore the park and appreciate Mount Gunderbooka. This site has shelters, picnic tables and toilet facilities. Approximately 22km from the main entrance to Gundabooka NP from the Kidman Way.

**Redbank Homestead:** this former pastoral property is a great way to appreciate the daily rhythms of the Darling River as you relax with a meal on the banks of the river and watch the wildlife. It accommodates up to 12 people and includes a fully-equipped kitchen, with communal eating area, beds, a toilet, hot shower and air conditioning.

**Belah Shearers' Quarters:** accommodates for up to 12 people, includes an air-conditioned bunk house with fully-equipped kitchen, communal eating area and 6 bedrooms. A separate toilet and shower block is located next to the shearers' quarters.



Mulgowan art site. Charlie McManus







Whistling Kite. James Faris

## Gundabooka walks

### Little Mountain walk:

An easy to medium graded 4.2km (2 to 3 hour) walk from Dry Tank picnic area through mulga woodlands to nearby Little Mountain. Head to the lookout for a view of the northwest escarpment of the Gunderbooka Range.

**Yapa (Mulgowan) art site walk:** An easy pleasant 1.4km (40 minute) return walk from the carpark to fascinating Aboriginal art sites along Mulareeya Creek.

**Valley of the Eagle (Ngana Malyan) walk:** A steep 5.7km (2 to 3 hour) difficult walk to the summit of Mount Gunderbooka. The return walk over rocky and very steep terrain should only be undertaken by fit and experienced walkers. However, you will be rewarded with spectacular views of the Darling floodplain all the way to the horizon.

You may wish to walk to the base of the mountain following a 1km easy walk.



Valley of the Eagles walk. David Finnegan

## Toorale National Park and State Conservation Area

Toorale National Park is located at the junction of the Warrego and Darling rivers and offers the rare opportunity to see the outback floodplain landscape come to life after rain. This park lies within the traditional lands of the Kurnu-Baakandji People.

Picnic by the river bank to the sight and sound of birds at Many Big Rocks picnic area (Karnu Yalpa) or spend the night and camp on the banks of the Darling River at the Darling River camp (Yapara Paaka Thuru). Enjoy birdwatching, fishing, awe-inspiring skies, dramatic sunsets, and starry nights.

Stop and explore the partially restored Toorale Homestead where we share with you the unique stories of this legendary outback pastoral empire. Best visited between March and October.

### Wake up in Toorale National Park

(online payment only)

#### Darling River campground (Yapara Paaka Thuru):

Relax on the Darling River Drive, and camp next to the Darling River while enjoying the peace of the outback. A basic bush camp with limited facilities.



Darling River campground. Joshua Smith



Warrego floodplain walk. Joshua Smith

## Toorale walks

**Warrego Floodplain walk:** This short easy 1km 30min return walking track offers views of the vast floodplains, birdwatching and seasonal wildflowers. Starting from Warrego floodplain picnic area (Wariku Pulka), the wide dirt track head leads through an avenue of coolabah trees to the sheltered Warrego floodplain lookout.

**Mt Talowla walk and lookout:** Enjoy this 2.6km, 1 hour return, medium grade walk to the top of Mount Talowla. Although only a small rise, the lookout and walk across the plateau reveal impressive 360° views across the broad expanse of land, from the Dunlop Ranges in the south, through to Mount Gunderbooka and across the Warrego and Darling floodplains.



Darling Pea. James Faris



Toorale Homestead. Joshua Smith

### Picnic areas:

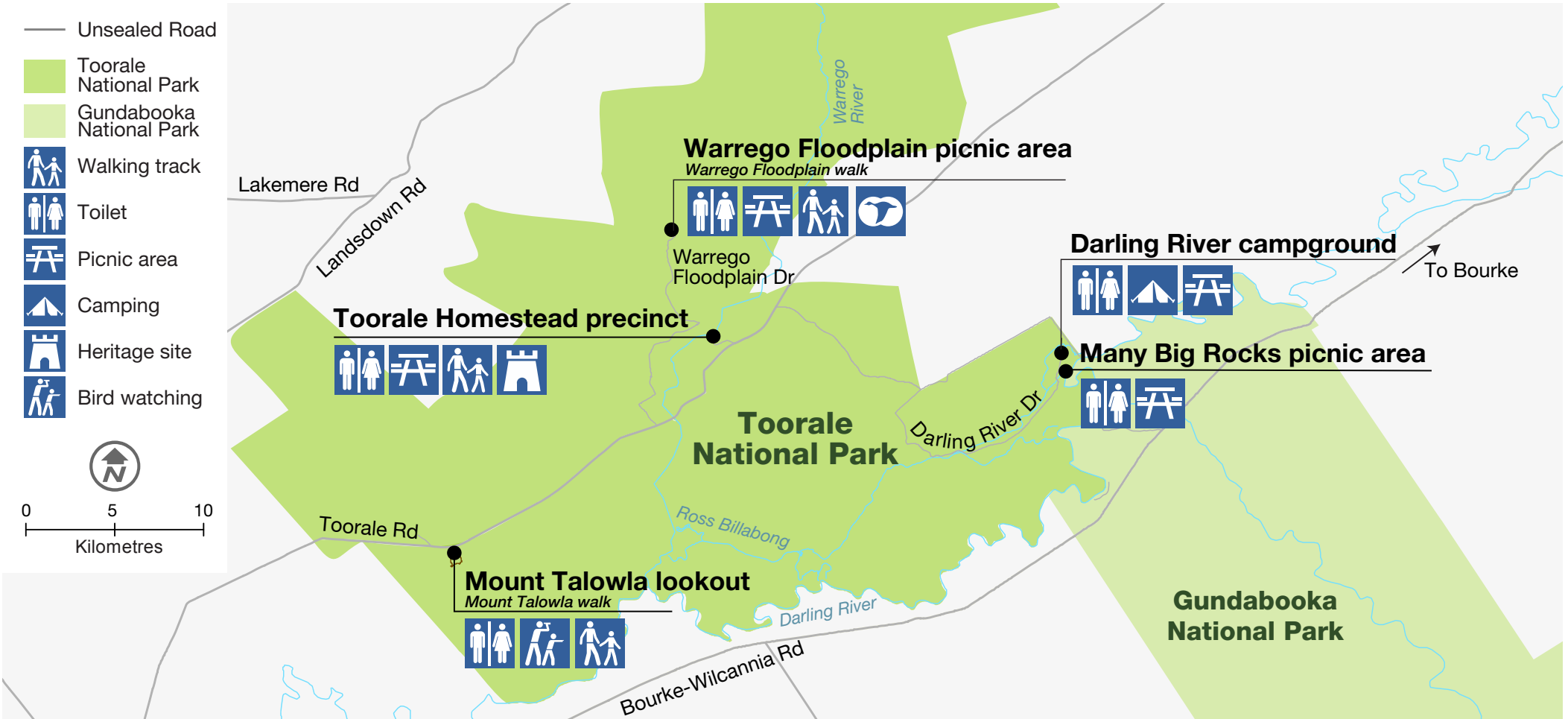
**Many Big Rocks picnic area (Karnu Yalpa).** Enjoy a picnic lunch by the banks of the Darling River and relax to the sounds of the birds.

**Toorale Homestead precinct (Yarramarra):** is open 7 days a week, 8am-5pm. The partially restored homestead of this vast outback precinct provides a window into a bygone era. In the late 1880s the station was a thriving sheep and cattle empire. Explore the grounds and read the accounts of a lifestyle we can only imagine. Entry inside the homestead and outbuildings is by NPWS guided tours only.

### Scenic drives:

**Darling River drive:** Roam along the Darling River within the national park. You'll travel through coolabah woodlands, which can come alive with blankets of wildflowers in spring.

**Warrego Floodplain drive:** Take a moment to enjoy the peaceful surrounds as you take in the vast floodplains and red sand hills. The drive allows access along the edge of long stretches of ephemeral wetlands, that come alive with waterbirds and other wildlife.





## Look after the parks

The protection of our natural environment and cultural heritage depends on the cooperation of all who visit and enjoy national parks. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Firewood collection is not permitted in the park. Please only use the fireplaces provided. Use fuel stoves where possible.
- Drive on public accessible roads only.
- Walking tracks are there to show you the way and to reduce your impact on the environment.
- All flora and fauna are protected.
- Please take your rubbish with you when you leave.
- Take care around Aboriginal sites, places of cultural significance and other protected areas.
- Observe any fire bans that are in place.

## Staying safe in parks

The Back o' Bourke national parks are remote and rugged places, weather can change quickly and conditions in the bush may be unpredictable. After rain unsealed roads within Bourke and Brewarrina councils are closed. There is limited to no phone reception in these parks. When visiting these parks, be aware of the risks and take responsibility for your own safety and the safety of any children in your care. Remember to plan, choose your walks and activities to match your fitness level and tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back. For more information about staying safe in parks visit [nswparks.info/safety](https://nswparks.info/safety).

## More information

### **NPWS Bourke Office**

Ph: (02) 6830 0200

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Toorale National Park. Van Ewijk/DPIE