



MICHAEL REID
MURRURUNDI
A BESPOKE GUIDE



MICHAEL REID

ART + FOOD

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We acknowledge the traditional owners of Murrurundi land, the Kamilaroi and Wanaruah people.

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WHY MICHAEL REID MURRURUNDI?

First off, per head of population, there are more art and craft galleries in Murrurundi than in Paris. Possibly Paris, Texas—but Paris, nonetheless. Paint stains have long been fashionable among the townsfolk. Welding scars are worn with pride. Artists from Sydney, Melbourne, and even the Netherlands have responded to the siren-like call, swapping city life for this quirky town of 900 people in the Upper Hunter Valley of New South Wales—a town few have heard of and even fewer can pronounce.

Second, in Murrurundi—Muh-ruh-run-dye—you can pat a pony at the pub. Almost every vista includes horses and cattle, plus the occasional kangaroo, wallaby, or deer. A magnificent white buck I named Ruki—mythical and otherworldly—lived in my garden for most of 2024 and some of 2025 before heading off to find his deer mates.

Most magnificent of all is the landscape. The beauty of the Upper Hunter reaches its crescendo in Murrurundi, although it's wise to occasionally take your eyes off the view, if only to check you're not about to step in manure. Ultimately, it is this majestic terrain that is the true draw-card.

Murrurundi is derived from the Wanaruah place name Murrumdoorandi, one of many sculptural rock formations surrounding the town.

Lastly, Murrurundi offers a family connection through historic Bobadil House. Growing up in the country—as we both did, Nellie Dawes at MacDonalds Creek outside Willow Tree, and me in Narrandera—we began searching for a less Sydney-urban, new country life in the late 1990s, looking as far afield as Hobart. Fortuitously, the stars aligned further north in the Upper Hunter.





THE SEVIL FAMILY AND BOBADIL HOUSE (1841–1842)

Nellie's mother, Leonie Dawes, is a member of the Sevil family, who arrived as convicts in the First Fleet. Leonie married a Mr Dawes, whose family also came on the First Fleet—descended from Lieutenant William Dawes, an officer after whom Dawes Point in Sydney is named. With two direct descendants on the same ship—albeit in very different circumstances—Leonie had long kept an eye on an early Sevil family residence in the Upper Hunter: Bobadil House, built in 1841–42.

Bobadil House is the oldest surviving building in Murrurundi, built of local sandstone by colonial surveyor Henry Dangar as a Cobb & Co stagecoach post. Briefly known as the Woolpack Inn before being renamed the White Swan Inn, it was converted into a private home in the 1890s for landholder John Sevil—Nellie's great-great-great-grandfather—and his wife and 11 children. Leonie kept a photograph of the house in her Glebe kitchen for decades.

In 2002, Nellie and I purchased Bobadil House from a distant relation, paying a record price for the Upper Hunter at the time. It was a wreck—and still is a wreck. A daunting purchase. The house, old stables, and gardens were, by that stage, a hot mess.

Travellers on the New England Highway once glimpsed the two-storey, late-Georgian residence set in a 4.5-hectare garden. Today it shelters behind towering hedges and London plane trees. Dormant

agapanthus, iris, rosemary and hibiscus were coaxed back to life after decades swallowed by the bush. Acanthus, periwinkles, hellebores, hollyhocks, violets and Japanese anemones have since thrived. A thicket of self-seeded robinia, alder and golden elm add a sense of mystery.

Restoration began in 2006 and has been a labour of love. Over two years, 80 truckloads of privet and blackberry were removed, revealing the sandstone ruins of a convict cellblock—part of the holding cells positioned every half day along the Great North Road. Ours was a small piece of a larger colonial network.

It's all well and good to move to the country, but I needed something to do. So, over the next decade, we rebuilt the cellblock—converted by John Sevil into a horse stable—and further transformed it into an art gallery. Slow steps during the Global Financial Crisis, while I was simultaneously keeping my Sydney gallery alive and expanding into Berlin, as one does. In those early years, Murrurundi took a distant backseat. I love cities, but I wasn't born in one—and I don't want to die in one. Murrurundi is a Goldilocks zone: far enough from Sydney, not suburban like the Central Coast or Southern Highlands.

THE NEW MURRURUNDI GALLERY

Wanting to live permanently in Murrurundi, we turned our attention in 2017 to building an entirely new art gallery on the site. The old sandstone stable block became the Concept Store & Kiosk, and a new gallery—our “big art shed”—was designed with architect William Zuccon. Unsurprisingly, for someone who has lived his professional life in the art world, I have firm views and a strong design aesthetic—just look at the cantilevered concrete outdoor fireplace. Several architects have photographed it, so I’m fully expecting it to appear in luxury homes across Australia. But I always work with the best professionals. Every collaboration—whether architectural or horticultural—throws up at least one idea I would never have considered. Over the last few years, with renewed focus, the gallery, Concept Store & Kiosk have become important creative planks within my congregation of galleries. Each gallery represents a different cultural catchment area, and Murrurundi is where I can afford to take risks.

If you’re a major Sydney gallery paying \$250,000 a year in rent, you don’t have the capacity to show emerging artists—you cannot have a bad month. Here, I can sell emerging art and develop those artists until they move on to Sydney. We funnel talent and provide a career path, which is rare. The gallery and Concept Store & Kiosk are built around destination audience experience. “No one visits 10 galleries on a Saturday afternoon anymore. They scan their phone, see 20 galleries, and visit one. You must give them a compelling reason to choose you.”

I wouldn’t open another gallery without a coffee shop; people cannot be more than seconds from beverages. Now, after all these years focused on the gallery, Bobadil House is finally in line for a dramatic and sympathetic redevelopment. Webbed toes crossed. Two decades on, the gallery and garden are thriving. Leading Australian artists—Adam Cullen, Robert Jacks, David Bromley, Noel McKenna, Chris Langlois, Paul Ryan, Lucy Vader, Mirdidingkingathi Juwarnda Sally Gabori, Owen Yalandja and many more—have held solo exhibitions in Murrurundi. A handful have made the leap from Murra to the city, including Lucy Vader, Carley Le Cerf and John Honeywell—a high number in my view. Uniquely, the Murrurundi gallery has forged strong alliance partnerships with leading regional mastheads. We hold an annual exhibition with Country Style magazine and have partnered with R.M. Williams. Murrurundi has also enabled us to develop the retail arm, an interest of mine.

Much creativity is running forward. Through national and international impact, strong sales turnover, and—most importantly—the redistribution of monies back to artists, Michael Reid Murrurundi is the most important regional commercial art gallery in the country. The gallery has, over decades, terraformed the Upper Hunter in a good way—and for this legacy alone, I am most proud. In the end, living in the country is beautiful, but you must do something. “You can’t simply live here and expect to have a wonderful life. I had to make the industry here to enjoy the life I wanted.” That industry has, in turn, boosted the town and community.

Michael Reid OAM, 2026





HOW AND WHY TO GET THERE

The journey to Murrurundi from Sydney—by road (3 hours 40 minutes) or rail (4 hours 30 minutes)—is picturesque. When you see horses galloping across the green paddocks of stud farms such as Emirates Park, you're almost there. Or, travelling an hour south from Tamworth, when the New England Highway winds down the Liverpool Range into a 60km/hr zone, slow down, wind down the window and take a breath.

To find Michael Reid Murrurundi, turn off the New England Highway and park on the verge a little way down Boyd Street. Open (and close) the gate and follow the gravel path to the gallery forecourt. You may be greeted by Bunty, our border collie. Nestled among hills, the township is rich in stories. Its character was forged by bushrangers such as Ben Hall and the frontier cycle of booms and busts.

Judith Wright wrote of this region:

"...the plains over the range had seemed to her wild and uncivilised, almost a legendary place; bushrangers had ridden there, hiding in the unexpected hills and valleys of the range, so that her uncles, riding north to Bukkulla, had always gone armed, and tales of Thunderbolt had haunted the valley with excitement and alarm." —*The Generations of Men*, 1959.

In the late 1800s, Murrurundi was the last stop on the train line. Cobb & Co stagecoaches provided the only public transport north over the Liverpool Range. You can still experience that bumpy intimacy—The Royal Hotel's horse-drawn Cobb & Co carriage comes into service for festivals such as the King of the Ranges Stockman's Challenge. The discovery of oil shale in the late 1800s created the boom that put Murrurundi on the map. Today, quality beef and horse studs sustain the town. Many historic structures have been preserved or restored, supported by an army of volunteers maintaining local landmarks such as Pioneer Cottage, Paradise Park and the Memorial Rose Garden.

Murrurundi is rich in history and community. Long-time residents and much-loved 'blow-ins' have built on the frontier spirit, shaping 'Murra' into a thriving centre for arts and culture. Come for the landscape and stay for the hospitality and vibrant arts scene. Stay up late arguing art and architecture at the pub—or simply gaze into an open fire.

THE MURRURUNDI ARGUS

A phenomenon not seen since the mid-19th-century Gold Rush is now reshaping regional Australia: a significant influx of people from metropolitan centres. The Murrurundi Argus is the ground-breaking, image-driven publication created for this new era. Established in 2021, The Argus is a lush, deeply visual monthly photo-essay that draws inspiration from regional Australia and amplifies this singular way of life to national and international audiences. It speaks to a discerning readership—culturally engaged, entrepreneurial, and with the means to enrich their lives through experience and acquisition.

The Argus shines a spotlight on the artists, leaders and change-makers who define modern regional character, building a formidable community of over 100,000 readers.

Through a multi-platform approach that bridges its regional heartland with our wider urban gallery networks, The Argus uncovers the remarkable stories of people across regional NSW, with a focus on the Hunter, Northwest and New England. The publication embodies creativity, visual allure, adventurous spirit and quintessential regional Australian character. It is, in short, essential regional Australian reading.

Visit us at michaelreidmurrurundi.com.au



MURRURUNDI
Argus



SEE

+

SHOP

STAY

SIGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Many of Murrurundi's attractions are on Mayne Street, which doubles as the New England Highway. Make it your pit stop for a good-quality brew at one of the cafés lining the highway. Exploring the back streets will reveal colonial cottages, old sandstone churches, convents, gaols and courthouses.

Murrurundi may be small, but it has all the old-fashioned essential services that make for a self-reliant town: train station, library, hospital, doctor's clinic, pharmacy and even a public payphone. Three old hotels—the Royal, the White Hart and the Railway—all offer hearty pub meals and beer gardens. It's an easy tour around town to visit each of them. (Remember: one drink per pub is a "heritage hotel trail"; two drinks is a "pub crawl".) You can also get a drink, a Chinese meal and a game of bowls at the Murrurundi Bowling Club, the only venue to still house one-armed bandits (poker machines). For self-improvement,

there are beauty salons and massage therapists, yoga classes, horse-riding stables, and art and craft workshops. Or be a sport and watch cricket and rugby league (go, the Mavericks!) at Wilson Memorial Oval, opposite the Visitor Information Centre.

Behind the oval are tennis courts, the public swimming pool and Rosedale, a centre for equine activities on many weekends of the year. Drop by to watch pony clubs, barrel-racing or the town's biggest annual event, the King of the Ranges Stockman's Challenge, held at Rosedale. (Recent dates have been in late September—check the King of the Ranges website or social media for current dates and program.

Railway Station

From frontier town to railway town, Murrurundi was the terminus of the northern line until the Ardglen Tunnel was built, and it remained an important locomotive depot after the line was extended to Quirindi. Built in 1872, Murrurundi Railway Station is architecturally interesting, comprising a fine “second-class” station building and associated structures, and is now heritage-listed as part of the Murrurundi Railway Station group. The daily train from Sydney’s Central Station is worth considering for a scenic journey to and from Murrurundi.

Victoria St, Murrurundi

nswtrainlink.info

Murrurundi Golf Course

Play a round at the nine-hole Murrurundi Golf Course, a few minutes out of town on Pages River Rd. The putting “greens” are sandy browns that you rake, and there is a tee-off from a small cliff that offers the promise of a record drive. When the only spectators are kangaroos and the green fee is modest, there’s not much to complain about. Remember to BYO refreshments, as the clubhouse is typically only open for functions. Even if you don’t play golf, the views are spectacular.

1 Paradise Rd, Murrurundi

[Murrurundi Golf Course](#)

Paradise Park + Eye of The Needle

A few minutes further along is Paradise Park, a wonderful picnic spot surrounded by ancient trees and giant boulders. If you are wearing sensible shoes, try the steep walk through the Eye of the Needle—a sliver-like crack in the rock—finishing at a dramatic clifftop view of the town. After visiting the Eye of the Needle lookout, you have the option of an additional 45-minute walk following the clifftops via a well-kept path (you’ll still need to watch your step) with the vista of Murrurundi the whole way. This path circles back to Paradise Park. Speaking of boulders, Wallabadah Rock just north of Murrurundi is locally reputed to be the largest monolith in Australia after Uluru.

[Paradise Park + Eye of The Needle](#)

Visitor Information Centre

The less energetic should start at the Visitor Information Centre (VIC). In the middle of town at 113 Mayne St, it is open daily and staffed largely by volunteers. The centre provides tourism information, sells local crafts and produce, and houses the Community Technology Centre, which offers wi-fi and computer access. A number of attractions are a very short walk from the VIC, including the Murrurundi Museum, Pioneer Cottage, the RSL Memorial Hall, and the Wilson Memorial Oval and Rosedale sports arena.

113 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Open: Daily, 10am - 2pm

[Upper Hunter Visitor Information Centres](#)





Murrurundi Museum

The Murrurundi Museum occupies the former Literary Institute (1913). The stocks out front are a reminder of the town's first police station, erected on this site in 1840, when law-breakers could opt for a few hours' humiliation in the stocks in lieu of paying a fine. Run by the Murrurundi and District Historical Society, the museum focuses on local social, industrial and bushranger history. As of the most recent information, the museum is generally open on weekends late morning, with additional access by arrangement via the VIC—check for current hours.

127 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Open: Weekends 10am - 12pm or by Appointment,
Contact Jenny Loasb, 0418 647 176

[Museums & Galleries of NSW](#)

Pioneer Heritage Cottage

Volunteers run and maintain the Pioneer Heritage Cottage (1889), a time capsule of pioneer life that shows the challenges of raising six children in an old slab cottage. Originally built on the Alston property at Timor, the building was restored, relocated to its current site, and donated to Murrurundi in 1996 by a descendant of one of those six children. Open weekends 10:00 to 12:00 or during the week by contacting the Visitor Information Centre who will organise entry. Donations towards the cottage's upkeep are accepted at the nearby wishing well.

Murrurundi

Open: Weekends 10am - 12pm, for further information
contact Jenny Loasby, 0418 647 176

[Museums & Galleries of NSW](#)

Royal Hotel

Further north is the Royal Hotel on the corner of Mayne and Murulla streets. A changing depot for Cobb & Co until the later 19th century, the rear of the building still has the old sandstone stables, and both the hotel and stables are individually listed as heritage items in the Upper Hunter Local Environmental Plan.

Royal Hotel, 144 Mayne St, Murrurundi

[Murrurundi Royal Hotel Facebook](#)

The Old Courthouse

Continue up Murulla Street to view the old Gaol and Courthouse complex (largely dating from 1860), built on the site of the original 1842 courthouse. The sergeant's residence (1890s) is at the southern end of the group. The complex remains a prominent, heritage-listed reminder of Murrurundi's frontier past.

Murulla St, Murrurundi

St Paul's Anglican Church

Find your way south to Mount St and St Paul's Anglican Church (1870s), designed by noted colonial architect J. Horbury Hunt and built of local sandstone for the White family. A descendant of that family was Nobel Prize-winning novelist Patrick White. Services are held in the church; current times are published on the parish's Facebook page (search Anglican Parish of Murrurundi).

Mount St, Murrurundi

[St Paul's Anglican Church Facebook](#)

Ben Hall

Bushrangers are a part of Murrurundi's history. Ex-convict Benjamin Hall, father of one of Australia's best-known bushrangers, Ben Hall, purchased the first block of land in Haydonton (the original name of the southern part of Murrurundi). The Hall family's original slab cottage (1842), where Ben spent much of his early childhood, stood near the corner of Mayne and Adelaide Streets. Also on Hall's original block is Rosebank (1889), now a private home at the corner of Adelaide and Liverpool Streets.

[127 Mayne St, Murrurundi](#)

Open: Weekends 10am - 12pm
[Museums & Galleries of NSW listing](#)

St Joseph's Catholic Church

You can find the grave of Ben's mother Eliza Hall (d. 1869) in the cemetery behind St Joseph's Catholic Church (1860) in Polding St. A small wooden chapel (1841) was replaced by the existing sandstone church, where services are still held. The cemetery also contains the tombs of town founders Peter Haydon (d. 1842) and Thomas Haydon (d. 1855). Next door is Murrurundi House (1880), a stately two-storey structure built as a convent for the Sisters of Mercy, now privately owned.

[59 Polding St, Murrurundi](#)



Pages River

Another way to explore Murrurundi is to follow the Pages River, which at times has been a gushing torrent flooding Mayne Street and at other times disappears beneath the riverbed, flowing invisibly on to join the Hunter River. Determined trekkers can follow the river, with public land on one side or the other, as it snakes through town. Speaking of S-shaped slitherers, do watch where you tread and wear sensible shoes, as there may be poisonous snakes about.

The best places to view the river are, the Swinging Bridge (a suspension footbridge first built before World War I) on Murulla St, and Arnold's Bridge on the New England Highway. From Arnold's Bridge, wander to the riverbank for a closer look at the colourful metal banners erected by the community and bearing designs of local flora and fauna.

[39 Liverpool Terrace, Murrurundi](#)

Upper Hunter Yoga

Yoga classes held in the scenic surrounds of Michael Reid Murrurundi gallery.

[Michael Reid Murrurundi, Boyd St,](#)

[Murrurundi Saturday mornings—exact times vary.](#)

Visit upperhunteryoga.com.au





SHOP

Pages on Pages

New, rare and secondhand books.

109 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Saturdays 10am–2pm

Visit [facebook.com/pagesonPages](https://www.facebook.com/pagesonPages)

Art Only by Anita

Studio, gallery and art classes by local artist Anita Faulkner.

185 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Mon–Fri 9am–4pm; Sat 12pm–2pm

Visit at [facebook.com/AnitaFaulknerArt/](https://www.facebook.com/AnitaFaulknerArt/)

Thrive Lending Co Mortgage broker

A brokerage firm specialising in residential home loans, commercial lending and asset finance for property buyers and investors.

68 Mayne St, Murrurundi

By appointment Mon–Fri 9am–5pm

Call 0400 698 895 or visit [thrivelendingco.com.au](https://www.thrivelendingco.com.au)

Chameleon Upholstery

Upholstery workshop with a wide fabric selection.

40 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Call 0438 251 285 before visiting.

David Darcy

Studio of award-winning photographer, author and painter David Darcy.

37 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Fri–Sun 10am–4pm

Visit at [@darcyandthefox](https://www.instagram.com/darcyandthefox)

Fox's Store

A unique blend of Greek milk bar, medical museum, vintage and antique shop—an experience as much as a shop.

45 Haydon St, Murrurundi

Thu–Sun 9.30am–5pm

Call 0417 204 391 or visit [foxsstoremurrurundi](https://www.foxsstoremurrurundi.com.au)

Murrurundi Pharmacy & Gifts

Full-service pharmacy with a selection of giftware and local crafts.

73 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Mon–Fri 9am–5pm; Sat 9am–12pm
Call (02) 6546 6502

Now and Then

Vintage objects and second-hand furniture under changing ownership and formats over the years.

Central Mayne St, Murrurundi

Dooley's (FoodWorks)

General store, post office agency, bottle shop and hardware in one heritage building.

60 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Mon–Sat 7am–7pm; Sun 8am–5pm
via [FoodWorks Murrurundi listing](#)

Eduardo Santos Artist

Studio of contemporary visual artist Eduardo Santos, known for vibrant abstract paintings. Studio visits are by appointment.

77 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Call 0431 598 338 or visit eduardosantosartist.com

Jute and Honey Upholstery

Upcycled furniture and homewares with retro country charm

147 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Call (02) 6545 6036 before visiting

Mayne St (Homewares)

The Mayne St café doubles as a style-packed gift and homewares shop.

63 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Wed–Fri 6.30am–2pm; Sat–Sun 7am–2pm
Visit [@maynestmdi](#)

Michael Reid Murrurundi

Art gallery and concept store with fashion, homewares, food, wine and accessories in a garden setting.

Boyd St, Murrurundi

Thu–Sun 9.30am–4pm
Call (02) 6546 6767 or visit michaelreidmurrurundi.com.au





The Lube Bay Gallery

Photographic art for home and office decor and the man cave. The Gallery space is available for hire.

41 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Open: Fri - Sun, 10am - 4pm

thelubebaygallery.com

iShootPix Photo Studio

Fully equipped space for capturing portraits, boudoir, personal branding and events with tuition available from beginner to advanced and one on one on training on request.

41 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Open: Fri - Sun, 10am - 4pm

elegantglamourboudoir.com

BB's Bits

Hand made, bespoke Macrame, arts and crafts available in store.

41 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Open: Fri - Sun, 10am - 4pm



STAY

Graze at the Willow Tree Inn

A range of excellent accommodation options above and alongside the award-winning Graze restaurant.

18 New England Hwy, Willow Tree

Call (02) 6747 7711 or visit grazewillowtree.com.au

Murrurundi Motel

Classic country motel at the southern end of town.

16 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Call (02) 6546 6082 or visit murrurundimotel.com.au

Murrurundi Caravan Park

Caravan park offering powered/unpowered sites and cabin accommodation.

11 Bernard St, Murrurundi

Call (02) 6546 6288 or visit murrurundicaravanpark.com.au

Pages River Bed & Breakfast

B&B set on a historic property beside the river.

149 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Call (02) 6546 6730 or visit isomorphic.com.au/murrurundi

Valley View Motel

Valley View Motel at the northern end of town with views over the valley.

244 New England Hwy, Murrurundi

Call (02) 6546 6044 or visit valleyviewmotel.com.au

White Hart Hotel

Heritage pub accommodation in the heart of town.

46 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Call (02) 6546 6242 or visit [White Hart Hotel Murrurundi](http://WhiteHartHotelMurrurundi.com.au)

Railway Hotel

Pub accommodation in a building established in 1880, with a long history as a rail-side watering hole.

48 Haydon St, Murrurundi

Call (02) 6546 6220 or visit railwayhotelmurrurundi.com.au

HOLIDAY HOMES & AIRBNB'S

Destination Murrundi

Your host, Destination Murrurundi, manages a beautiful collection of short-stay accommodation and Airbnb properties to suit even the most discerning traveller — and every budget. From beautifully appointed country cottages perfect for two, to stylish homes for girls' weekends, relaxed family escapes, and spacious farm stays for the entire extended family — there is something for every kind of getaway.

Call 0428 414 256 or visit destinationmurrurundi.com

Murrurundi Cottage

6 Guests • 3 Bedroom • 3 Beds • 1 Bath

Paddy's Cottage An idyllic contemporary farm stay set within the original 1920s weatherboard cottage amid the rugged magnificence of Green Creek, 15 minutes' drive from Murrurundi. Restored over two years, this simple rustic luxury accommodation features three bedrooms, two bathrooms and a cook's kitchen with a charming mix of antiques and modern furnishings. Surrounded by 2500 acres at the foot of Protection Hill with sweeping high-country vistas.

1629 Timor Rd, Green Creek NSW 2338
Visit michaelreidmurrurundi.com.au or [Airbnb](#)

SERVICES

Visitor Information Centre (VIC)

Tourism information, local crafts and the Community Technology Centre.

113 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Daily 10am–2pm

Call (02) 6546 6446 or visit

[Upper Hunter Visitor Information Centres](#)



Michael Reid Kiosk

The Kiosk, situated in the scenic garden of my gallery, offers specially blended coffees, moreish pies, toasties and homemade cakes.

Michael Reid Murrurundi, Boyd St, Murrurundi

Thu–Sun, 9.30am–4pm

Call (02) 6546 6767 or visit michaelreidmurrurundi.com.au

Graze Restaurant and Bistro

Graze serves its own herd of dry-aged black Angus beef, with seafood and vegetarian options also available, in the award-winning Willow Tree Inn.

Willow Tree Inn, 18 New England Hwy, Willow Tree

Wed 5.30–8pm, Thu–Sat 12pm–2pm

and 5.30pm–8pm, Sun 12pm–2pm

Call at (02) 6747 7711 or visit grazewillowtree.com.au

The Cottage (Scone)

A historic cottage on Scone's main street, now one of the Upper Hunter's best restaurants, combining a café by day with a refined restaurant at night.

196 Kelly St, Scone

Tue–Wed, 7.30am–11:30am, Thu–Sat 12pm–2pm

Call (02) 6545 1215 or visit thecottagescone.com

Gelato on Mayne

A popular spot with a selection of gelato that changes weekly.

107 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Thu–Sun 11am–5pm

Visit at [@gelatoonmayne](https://www.instagram.com/gelatoonmayne)

Life of Pie

Cakes, coffee, sandwiches, bread and, of course, pies.

13 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Mon–Fri 6.30am–3pm, Sat–Sun 6.30am–2.30pm

Visit at [@murrurundilifeofpie](https://www.instagram.com/murrurundilifeofpie)

Mayne St

Café and pantry with chic country style, serving breakfast and lunch, and stocking homewares.

63 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Wed–Fri 6.30am–2pm; Sat–Sun 7am–2pm

Visit at [@maynestmdi](https://www.instagram.com/maynestmdi)



EAT

+

DRINK



Take a Break

A reliable spot for breakfast and lunch, conveniently located on Mayne Street. (Hours can vary; check locally.)

113 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Mon–Fri 8am–2pm, Sat–Sun 9am–1pm

Call (02) 6546 6528

The Murrurundi Collective

Local community food hub with an attached café and regular produce/food events.

132 Mayne St, Murrurundi

Call 0428 414 256 or visit [The Murrurundi Collective](#)

The Plains Pantry (Willow Tree)

Café, deli and grocery with local staples, including Nundle Smokehouse trout, plus excellent coffee and pantry items.

6 Cadell St, Willow Tree

Mon–Sat 7am–4pm, Sun 8am–3pm

Call (02) 6747 1348 or visit theplainspantry.com.au

The Pubs

The Royal Hotel, Railway Hotel and White Hart Hotel in Murrurundi all offer lunch and dinner most days, with beer gardens and classic country-pub atmosphere

NORTH

A short drive north from Murrurundi brings you onto the Liverpool Plains, where sunflowers, sorghum, corn and wheat create patchwork fields of colour. Willow Tree is a pretty little village with arts and antiques just 18km up the New England Highway. The Willow Tree Inn, its Graze Restaurant and on-site accommodation are all well regarded for food and stays. West of Willow Tree is Windy Station, a 20,000ha “food and fibre” enterprise. The vast 1901 woolshed, shearers’ quarters and cottage now serve as an atmospheric events and accommodation venue, while the shed itself is listed on the NSW State Heritage Register. Nearby Gilay Estate offers off-grid huts with wood-fired hot tubs and sweeping views across the Liverpool Plains—very much

up and running, and booked as a luxury farm-stay rather than a future project. Continue on to Quirindi, a service town for the surrounding farming district. Several rural-heritage attractions are close by, including the Australian Railway Monument and Rail Journeys Museum at Werris Creek, a short drive from Quirindi, which commemorates railway workers and regional rail history. For a panoramic view of the plains, head to the wonderfully named Who’d A Thought It Lookout overlooking Quirindi. An easy 45–60-minute drive north on the New England Highway, then east along the Fossickers Way, brings you to Nundle. Nundle Woollen Mill – Opened in 2000, this is one of the few remaining working wool mills in Australia.

It welcomes over 25,000–30,000 visitors each year, who come to see the vintage machinery at work, buy yarn and knitwear, and reconnect with Australia’s wool heritage. Cottage on the Hill – Patchwork Barn – Kerry Swain hosts regular quilting retreats and classes, plus the Annual Outdoor Quilt Airing (traditionally around Mother’s Day) and “Girls’ Day in the Country” quilting weekend (March). Odgers and McClelland Exchange Stores – A beautifully restored 1891 general merchants building, now a destination shop for enamelware, cast-iron cookware, garden tools, teas, brushes and other practical, “last-a-lifetime” goods. Other Nundle mainstays include Jenkins Street Antiques and Fine China, Nundle Art Gallery, Mount Misery Gold Mine

Café, Nundle Country Traders and a clutch of second-hand and vintage stores. Locally grown and cooked food is a year-round drawcard. The Nundle Craft Shop is a bustling weekend hub for seasonal vegetables, preserves and plants. Arc-en-Ciel Trout Farm at Hanging Rock supplies trout to The Peel Inn Hotel and local outlets; opening days vary, so check current hours before visiting.



NUNDLE ANNUAL EVENTS

- Nundle Go For Gold Easter Festival (Easter)
- Great Nundle Dog Race – First Sunday in May, a long-running fundraiser for Nundle Public School.
- Annual Outdoor Quilt Airing at Cottage on the Hill (May)
- Nundle Rocks and Country at The DAG – Fringe events to the Tamworth Country Music Festival, with extensive live-music programs at Nundle venues and DAG Sheep Station. Hats off to country mid-year country-music events at the DAG Sheep Station.

In summer, Sheba Dams at Hanging Rock, Chaffey Dam on the Nundle Road and the Peel River are popular for swimming, fishing and boating. Further north again, about an hour from Murrurundi, lies Tamworth—where locals go when they need Bunnings, Officeworks or a six-screen cinema. Tamworth is also Australia's officially recognised Country Music Capital and home to the Tamworth Country Music Festival. Among the car yards and Canary Island date palms are handsome Art Deco buildings, including the Central Hotel on Peel Street.

FOOD AND DRINK

- Powerhouse Hotel Tamworth by Rydges
A polished motel with contemporary rooms, the acclaimed Workshop Kitchen restaurant and the moody Coal Bunker Bar.
- Tomms Bar – A cocktail bar styled with Slim Aarons inspired décor and an extensive wine offering.
- Humble Espresso – A café in Tamworth's upper streets known for quality coffee.
- The Bell House – A popular breakfast and brunch spot in town.





SOUTH

Approaching Murrurundi from the south, near Wingen (pronounced win-gen), is the turn-off to Burning Mountain Nature Reserve. Here, an underground coal seam has been smouldering for an estimated 5,500 years—the oldest known continuously burning coal seam in the world. The walking track (about an hour return) leads to viewpoints over smoking vents and offers superb views of the valley, though the sulphur smell and heat make it more dramatic than romantic. The Durham Hotel at Wingen is a classic country pub with plenty of character and generous meals, as well as wide verandahs taking in the rural views.

Between Murrurundi and Wingen lies Bickham, which appears in the family history of poet Judith Wright. Her work *The Generations of Men* draws on this landscape and its vineyards, and Bickham features in the recent Amazon series *The Lost Flowers of Alice Hart*, with Murrurundi locations such as Dooley's also making on-screen appearances. Continue south along the New England Highway to Scone, the "Horse Capital of Australia". Drop into Plants on Main, a nursery-café where you can browse plants and gardening paraphernalia over coffee.

On Kelly Street, home of The Cottage restaurant, you'll also find Green Seed Grocer, a wholefoods store offering fresh produce, organic cleaning products, bread and pastries on selected days, plus excellent coffee. East of Scone, in postcard-pretty Gundy, the Linga Longa Inn has become known for serving some of the best pub food in the Upper Hunter, with a loyal local following





EAST

In Blandford, admire the ivy-clad former St Luke's Anglican Church (1880), a small stone church now privately owned. From Blandford, drive to Timor for striking rock formations and native vegetation, including groves of black-trunked grass trees.

Timor has a charming timber church (1883, now private) built of pit-sawn timber and surrounded by rural scenery. Nearby are the Timor Caves, a series of limestone caverns; access can be tricky, so check local advice before visiting.

About 3km along Timor Rd from Blandford, turn left into Scott's Creek Road and continue roughly 16km north to Wallabadah Rock, the plug of an extinct volcano. Covering around 60ha and rising to about 959m, it is widely reputed to be one of Australia's largest monoliths after Uluru—though this is very much a local boast rather than an official title.

WEST

West of Murrurundi lies Merriwa (merry-war), about 100km via Scone. The town's handsome historic buildings are best seen during the Festival of the Fleeces, held every June long weekend, when the main street fills with market stalls, entertainment and the famous "Running of the Sheep" in red socks.

From Merriwa you can explore Goulburn River National Park and The Battery Picnic Area, where cooled lava has formed dramatic columnar rock formations along a cliff face.

Further south-east lies Denman, a small town with cafés, pubs, restaurants and nearby wineries. Among them is Two Rivers Wines, a picturesque vineyard on the banks of the Hunter River, known for cellar-door tastings and views.



WHEN TO VISIT

Murrurundi Arts & Crafts Council

The active Murrurundi Arts & Crafts Council encourages and nurtures artistic pursuits. The Council runs biennial and annual events, such as the Murrurundi Art Prize (every May), Photographic Arts Prize (every September), and Opera (every second November). For those who want to get their hands dirty (or at least stained), it also runs art workshops with visiting and local artists.

Visit [Murrurundi Arts and Crafts Council](#)

King of the Ranges Stockman's Challenge

A three-day celebration of traditional bush skills at Rosedale, Murrurundi. Expect bareback and cross-country riding, stock handling, pack-saddle and horseshoeing challenges, campdraft, bush poetry, markets and food, with the wild-horse catch final on Sunday. Held annually in late September.

Visit [King of the Ranges Stockman's Challenge & Bush Festival](#)

Murrurundi Willow Tree Sheepdog Trial

A century-old sheepdog trial held over an April weekend at Wilson Memorial Oval. Watch handlers and dogs navigate stubborn sheep through a challenging course in a surprisingly suspenseful competition.

Junior Stockman's Challenge

Run by the Murrurundi & District Pony Club at Rosedale. Young riders test their budding bush skills in a scaled-down stockman's challenge. Usually held once a year amid the club's monthly program.

Visit [King of the Ranges Stockman's Challenge](#)

Beersheba Commemoration

The Murrurundi Troop of the 12th Australian Light Horse Regiment marks the anniversary of the Charge of Beersheba (31 October 1917) with a mounted parade and ceremony in late October.

Darley Scone Cup Race Day

Horse racing is a popular sport in the Upper Hunter, with regular meets. A highlight is the Scone Cup. A local half-holiday is held on the Friday, and people come in busloads to the picturesque race club. One of the biggest race days, in country Australia.

Visit [Scone Race Club](#)

Tamworth Country Music Festival

Put on your cowboy boots and get set to dance for days and nights: this is one of the biggest Country Music festivals in the world.

Visit [Tamworth Country Music Festival](#)





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