The Poets Route
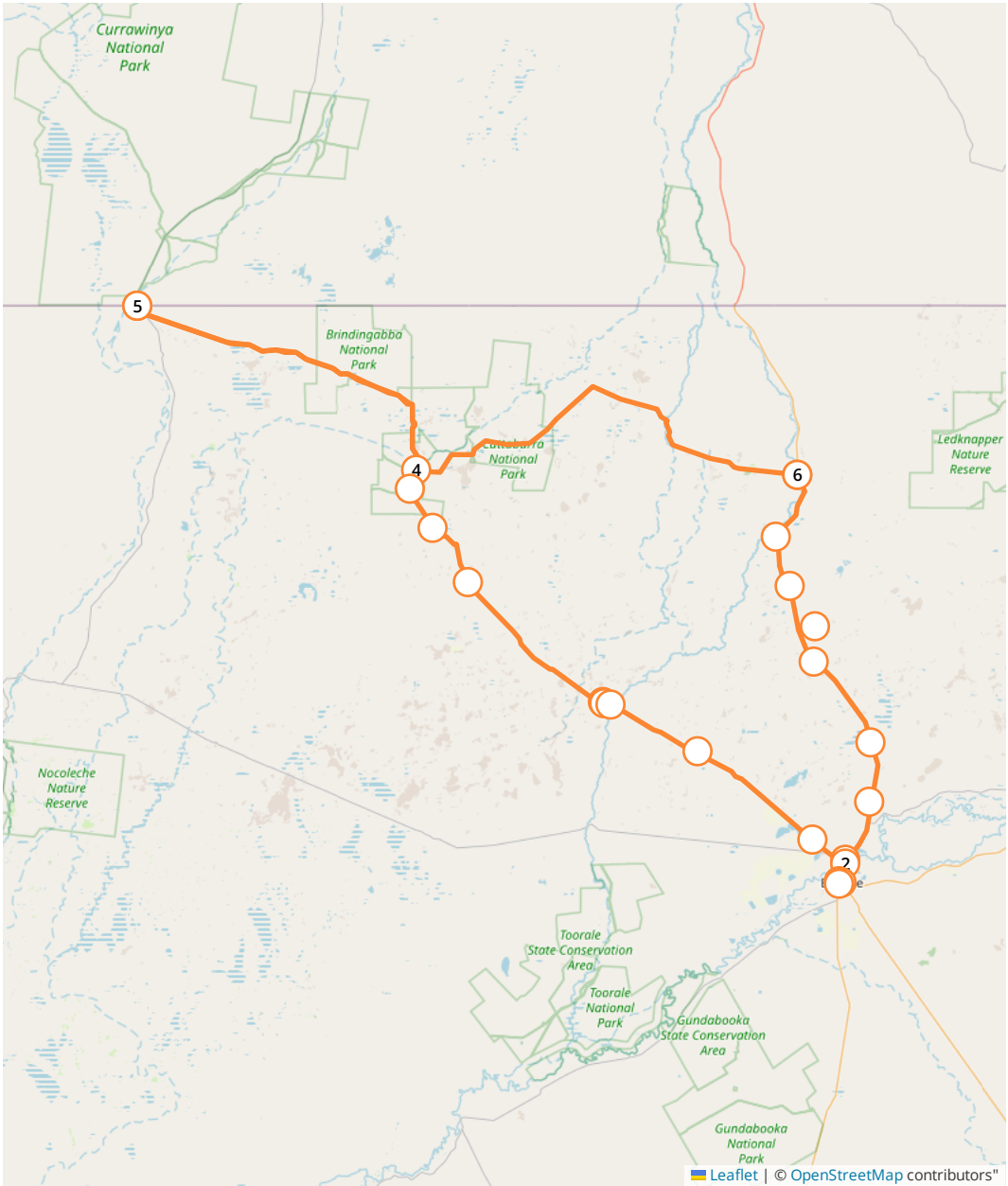

Details

◆ Circuit

🏍 Distance - 527km

🍺 Pub Stops - 5

⏱ Duration - 1-3 Days

🚗 Drive Time - 8hrs

This long loop crosses the Warrego, Cuttaburra and Irara Rivers and also crosses the Queensland Border into the adjacent township of Hungerford.

This area of the Bourke Shire is famous for its association with great Australian poets like Henry Lawson, Scottish born Will Ogilvie, and the ill-fated Harry 'Breaker' Morant.

The Poets Route follows the Warrego and Cuttaburra Rivers, along with the various tributaries which go to make up the vast depression ephemeral wetland of the Cuttaburra Basin. This journey follows the footsteps of Henry Lawson who famously walked to Hungerford in the Summer of 1892-93 and which has been termed 'the most important treks in Australian Literary History'.

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The Poets Route

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(1) Bourke

While only two hotels remain operational in Bourke, the outback town is synonymous with the outback, pioneering adventure, and the associated hotels that are scattered throughout the shire. Probably one of the most iconic towns in Australia, synonymous with the term 'The Back of Bourke', this small rural township is located on the banks of the Darling River, and is something of a regional centre for surrounding villages and properties. Sometimes known as 'The Gateway to the Real Outback' Bourke is a key service centre for fuel and supplies before heading out to explore the region.

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(2) PUB STOP | Port of Bourke Hotel

The grand old lady of Bourke, the port of Bourke (originally called 'the Royal') is one of the finest buildings in town, and also one of the finest pubs. A large, double story building with deep verandahs on both levels, the pub faces Mitchell Street and is close to the popular wharf precinct, and the newly paved and landscaped park areas around the river.

■ Leaflet | © OpenStreetMap contributors"

32 Mitchell St, Bourke, NSW, Australia

③ Historical Pubs & Breweries of Bourke

Sawing and hammering at the embryonic settlement on the Darling River near Fort Bourke in 1860 heralded construction of its first building – American William Sly's Tattersall's Hotel. Pioneer drover John Kelly's Old Fort (Royal) Hotel soon followed and by the time of the big 1864 flood, the small settlement boasted three more pubs.

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(4) North Bourke

Four hotels jostled for trade when passing drovers, teamsters and shearers arrived at the staging post on the junction of the roads to Hungerford and Barringun, in the old days when the big mobs of a thousand or more head of cattle came from stations far to the North into Bourke railhead. The 'Judas bullock' led them across the span to their fate.

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(5) PUB STOP | The 'Northy' Back O' Bourke Hotel

Perched on the corner at North Bourke, 'The Northy' is the first thing you'll see after you cross the North Bourke Bridge, and its a great place to stop and get your bearings. The pub is a modern building recently opened which replaced the historic old riverview hotel that was destroyed by fire in 2010.
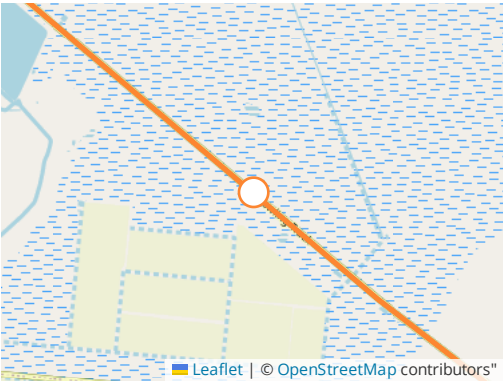

Leaflet | © OpenStreetMap contributors"

Arrive via Car from **PUB STOP | Port of Bourke Hotel**
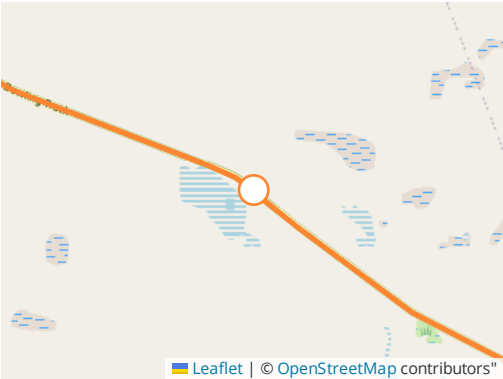6.5 km / 4.04 mi - *7 minutes*

GET DIRECTIONS

⑥ Pub Spot | Sutherlands Lake House

Known as 'Sutherland's Lake House', and also 'Lauradale Lake' or 'Lauradale Hotel' – the pub appears to have been a simple construction with an earth floor in the dining room.

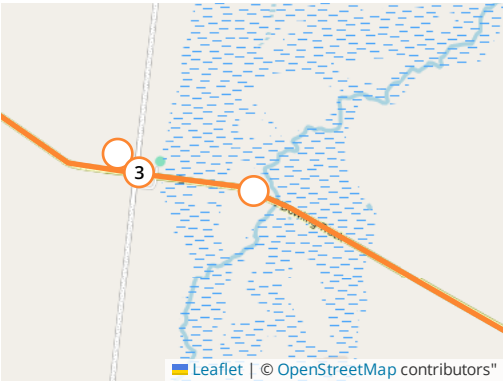Leaflet | © OpenStreetMap contributors"

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(7) **Pub Spot | Kelly's Camp**

Kelly's Camp was originally as a wine shanty and later a became a hotel. The site is on a regular supply of artesian water, and catagorised as 'a farm' by 15 year old R. Stretton in his published correspondence to Dame Durden.

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⑧ Pub Spot | Salmonford Hotel

The Salmonford Hotel was located on the East side of the Warrego. It's Licence moved across to the village in 1913 as the current Warrego Hotel.

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⑨ **Fords Bridge**

The village of Fords Bridge, located on the Warrego River, was once a tiny flourishing town with a butcher shop, post office, school and race track, and of course, a pub! Today "Fordsie" is a sleepy town of four, however, Fords Bridge can claim at least one famous association: the famous Australian poet, Henry Lawson, lived and worked in the area.

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(10) PUB STOP | Warrego Hotel

Call into the historical Warrego Hotel, built in 1913 from mud brick, thought to be the only pub in Australia still standing constructed of mud bricks. The pub also rests on the site of the Cobb and Co changing station where the legendary stage coaches swapped out their horses for a fresh team.
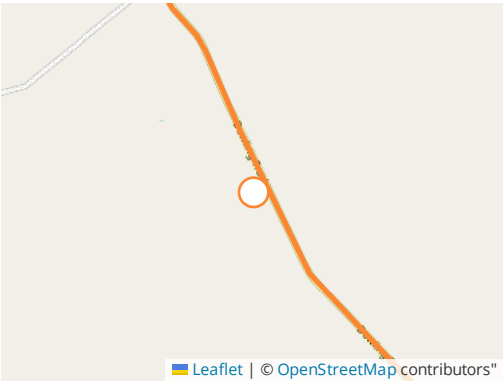

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Arrive via Car from **PUB STOP | The 'Northy' Back O' Bourke Hotel**
61.3 km / 38.1 mi - *50 minutes*

GET DIRECTIONS

What is a QR code?
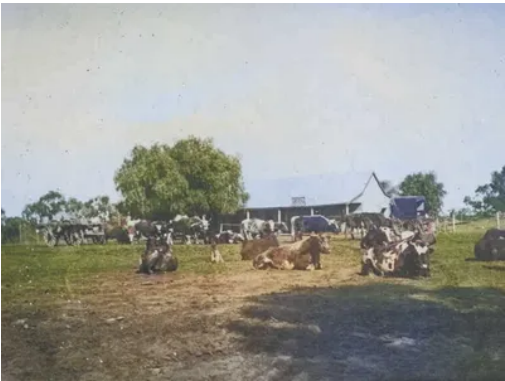To learn how to use QR codes refer to the last page

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⑪ Pub Spot | Youngerina

Named for a local spring, the licensed pub at Youngerina Station was moved to Mosman, eventually to be replaced by the hotel building from Lake Eliza.

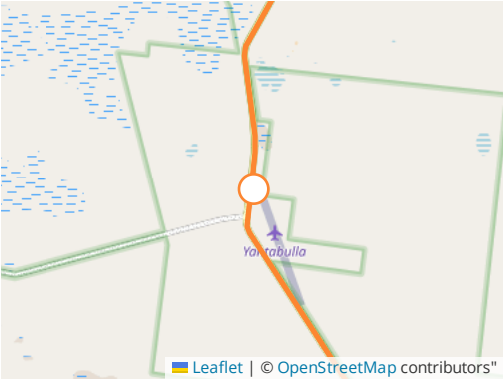
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(12) **Pub Spot | Lake Eliza Hotel**

When the lake was full, Arthur Atwood's Lake Eliza Hotel was a popular stopover for teamsters and drovers.

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(13) Pub Spot | Yantabulla

Bourke was just a couple of shanty pubs and a store when adventurous young pastoralist Vincent Dowling came across the springs at Yantabulla when exploring North-West from the Darling in 1860.
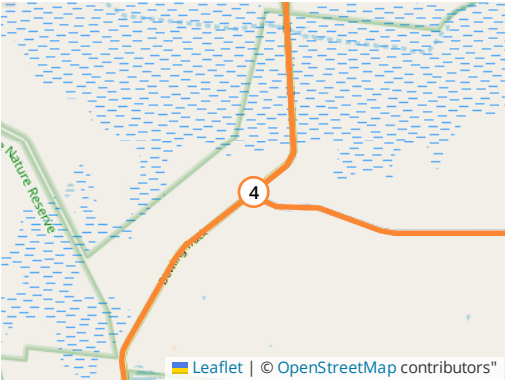

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(14) Road junction – Fords Bridge – Bourke / Hungerford / Enngonia

From this junction point you can continue to Hungerford or proceed to Enggonnia or Fords Bridge - Bourke if going the opposite direction.

Arrive via Car from **PUB STOP | Warrego Hotel**
67.5 km / 41.9 mi - *41 minutes*

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(15) **Hungerford**

Located right on the Queensland/NSW border near the Paroo River, the township sits nestled in the lee of the Wild Dog Fence and features a large border gate to cross jurisdictions. The town was named after Irish pioneer pastoralist Thomas Hungerford.
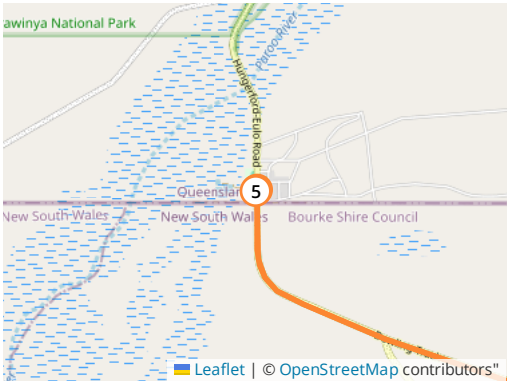
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(16) PUB STOP | Royal Mail Hotel

The Royal Mail Hotel is located in the main street of Hungerford and is within a short driving distance of the Currawinya National Park.

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Archernar Street, Hungerford (Qld), Australia

Arrive via Car from **Road junction - Fords Bridge - Bourke / Hungerford / Enngonia** 78.2 km / 48.6 mi - *47 minutes*

GET DIRECTIONS

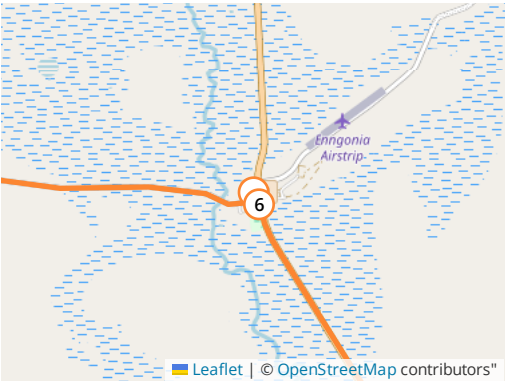🍃 Leaflet | © OpenStreetMap contributors"

(17) **Enngonia**

The village of Enngonia is little more than a few buildings and a popular watering hole, the Oasis Hotel/Motel, on the Mitchell Highway.

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18 PUB STOP | Oasis Hotel

Enngonia a friendly, one pub town in north western NSW located 40 kms south of the Qld border and approx. 100 kms from the regional hub of Bourke.

Oasis Hotel Enngonia
ⓘ Andrew Drane @ BushMedia.com

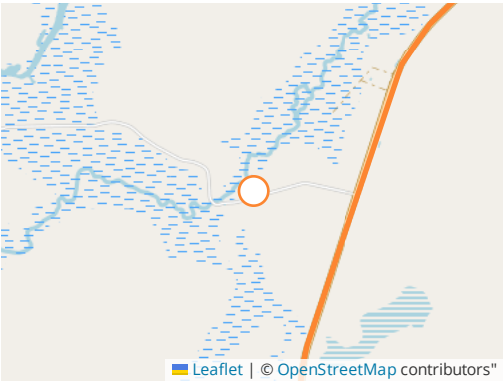Balalie Street, Enngonia, Australia

🚗 Arrive via Car from **PUB STOP | Royal Mail Hotel**
174 km / 108 mi - *2 hours 25 minutes*

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What is a QR code?
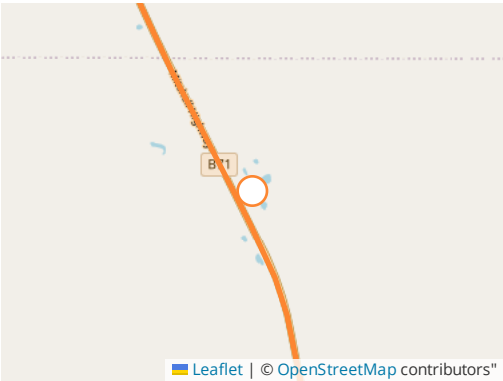To learn how to use QR codes refer to the last page

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(19) Pub Spot | Mungunya Hotel

Drawn from the Aboriginal name 'Yarra-Mungany' and built 17 kms South of Engonnia in 1877 by Joseph Conway, a pound keeper from Brewarrina.
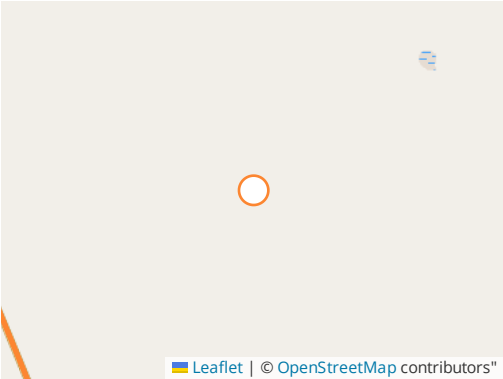
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⑳ Pub Spot | Native Dog Hotel

Mounds, craters and depressions locate the natural Native Dog Springs site. The name may be an echo of the long Aboriginal tribal use of the area indicated by the scatter of artefacts.

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(21) Pub Spot | Box Holes Hotel

About 6kms past Grass Hut, the hotel at Box Holes Tank seems more a myth than a reality. In 1886, a lady with the very Irish sounding name of Brigette O'Neill was convicted of dealing in sly grog there.

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(22) Pub Spot | Grass Hut Hotel

Also called Grass Tree Hotel. Sited at Claypan Hollow 60 kms north of Bourke in 1892 near a government tank.

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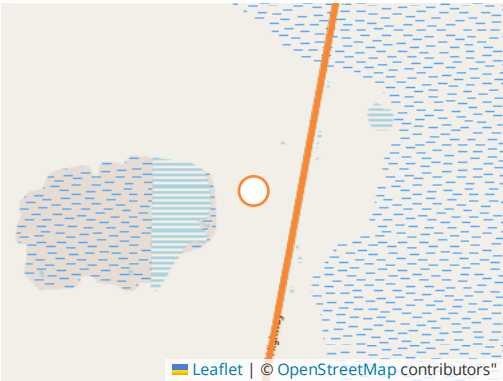
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(23) **Pub Spot | Dry Lake Hotel**

Some 35 kilometres north of Bourke on the road to Barringun on the Queensland border there is an ephemeral water body commonly known as the Dry Lake. This shallow depression was an important watering point on the dry stretch of road between the Darling and Warrego Rivers and as such was also home to several well-patronised wayside inns, in particular the Warraweena Hotel that survived from the days of horse and coach to motor transport.

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(24) **Pub Spot | Gidgea Camp Hotel**

The remarkable Mrs Harrod raised three consecutive families in the pub she began out of a cellar she excavated at Cedia Camp, half a mile south of the bore on the Eastern side of the road to Barringun.

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(25) **Bourke**

While only two hotels remain operational in Bourke, the outback town is synonymous with the outback, pioneering adventure, and the associated hotels that are scattered throughout the shire. Probably one of the most iconic towns in Australia, synonymous with the term 'The Back of Bourke', this small rural township is located on the banks of the Darling River, and is something of a regional centre for surrounding villages and properties. Sometimes known as 'The Gateway to the Real Outback' Bourke is a key service centre for fuel and supplies before heading out to explore the region.

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🚗 Arrive via Car from **PUB STOP | Oasis Hotel**
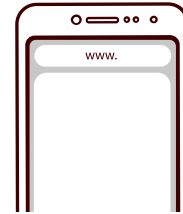97 km / 60.3 mi - *57 minutes*

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Access websites and features such as maps and directions

Optional Downloads

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For use in apps such as GPS Navigation and wearable devices

KML File

For use in offline mapping products, such as maps.me and Google Maps

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