

## 8 Day Tour | Lightning Ridge and Moree THE GREAT ARTESIAN DRIVE



Discover the magic of the outback on this unique journey through Lightning Ridge and Moree, where healing artesian waters, fascinating local characters, rich history, and stunning landscapes come together. From relaxing hot springs and rare black opals to quirky art experiences, country hospitality, and scenic drives along the Great Artesian Basin, this thoughtfully crafted tour blends relaxation, discovery, and unforgettable moments — read on to see everything included in this remarkable escape.

### Day 1: (MTLD)

### HOME TO NARRABRI

Monday 17 August 2026



Welcome to our tour to **Lightning Ridge and Moree**. Our journey features a portion of the **Great Artesian Drive**. Ancient in its creation, the Great Artesian Basin is one of the largest artesian freshwater resources in the world. Artesian water is underground water confined and pressurised within a porous and permeable geological formation and here in the Northwest, the waters are generally 38°C. Great to soak away those aches and pains and rejuvenate the body! We have a travel day ahead, but we enjoy a stop at our first artesian bore bath in Pilliga soak and relax our muscles before we make our way to **Narrabri** for our overnight stay.

**Nandewar Motor Inn, Narrabri | 1 night**

Port Bus morning tea | Lunch | Dinner at Narrabri RSL - Outback Shack

### Day 2: (BMTLD)

### NARRABRI TO LIGHTNING RIDGE

Tuesday 18 August 2026

This morning, we head to Walgett, where we see the **Walgett Water Tower** which depicts Jimmy Little, a celebrated and beloved Australian Aboriginal musician, actor and advocate whose career spanned six decades. As we approach Lightning Ridge the first thing we see is Stanley the Emu. Stanley is an 18-meter sculpture made by artist John Murray and he has been made entirely from scrap metal from a VW Beetle. His light-hearted depiction gives you some foresight into the art you will see with in the town. **Lightning Ridge**, with its stark and scarred landscape, this town has a peculiar fascination for visitors. Famous for magnificent opals, the town is home to the unique black opal, a rare and luminous gem mined from the surrounding plains.



It is the only place in Australia (and one of the few places in the world) where the highly prized opal is found. Over the next few days, you may want to visit the town's many opal stores where you can marvel at these local wonders. We visit **Down to Earth Opals**, which have been mining, designing and specialising in selling to the world one-of-a-kind jewellery pieces and top gem quality loose opals.

**Wallangulla Motel, Lightning Ridge | 3 nights**

Breakfast at Coogee Café | Port Bus morning tea | Lunch Pack | dinner in motel

### Day 3: (BMTLD)

### LIGHTNING RIDGE AND GOODOOGA Wednesday 19 August 2026

Today we have arranged a special tour with a **local guide**. We will see historic **Three Mile Flat** – site of early opal miners’ settlement and the largest open cut opal mine in NSW – **Lunatic Hill**. We’ll also view an opal cutting demonstration, view the largest opal agitator and entry to the **Bottle House** mining museum and **Amigos Castle**.



Following lunch, we head out of town to visit **Goodooga**, where we visit the **Great Artesian Baths** where we experience the healing power of the hot springs and enjoy the stunning outback surrounds. Artesian water has been known to boost blood circulation, reduce stress, promote sleep and relieve pain. It has been used as treatment for thousands of years throughout Japan and Europe. After a relaxing afternoon, we drive back to Lightning Ridge.

Breakfast and dinner at the hotel Port Bus morning tea | Lunch included on tour

### Day 4: (BMTLD)

### LIGHTNING RIDGE

### Thursday 20 August 2026

This morning, we visit **The Hidden Gem**, a unique off grid art camp originally built by acclaimed local artist John Murray. Here we are hosted by award winning entertainers, Mel and Susie, known as Australian Champion Bush Poets and Yarnspinners. We enjoy a delicious morning tea and comic tour of this amazing property. Next, we visit **John Murray Art Gallery**.



Wandering around the gallery, John’s artistic talent becomes apparent with his pieces filled with light and humour. It’s clear he likes to make people smile with his creations! This afternoon we have an intriguing visit to the **Chambers of the Black Hand** - an immersive art experience. Located 12m underground, you’ll be astonished by the numerous sculptures, all hand carved into the sandstone walls by artist, Ron Canlin’s. This is truly a one-of-a-kind experience, where you won’t believe it until you see it! Tonight, we are in for a treat at the **Australian Opal Centre**, beneath a vast night sky for **SPARK**. The cinematic experience is a celebration of the natural, cultural and technological heritage of Lightning Ridge opal fields, their opal and people.



Breakfast and dinner at the hotel | Port Bus morning tea | Lunch Pack

\*Please wear warm, comfortable clothes for SPARK

### Day 5: (BMTLD)

### LIGHTNING RIDGE TO MOREE

### Friday 21 August 2026



We leave Lightning Ridge this morning we continue our journey, stopping along the way at **Burren Junction Artesian Bore Bath** before arriving in Moree. Located in the beautiful Gwydir Valley, **Moree** is a place of relaxation and rejuvenation.

**Artesian Spa Motel, Moree | 2 nights**

Breakfast and dinner at the hotel | Port Bus morning tea | Lunch Pack

### Day 6: (BMTLD)

### MOREE

### Saturday 22 August 2026

This morning, we meet our **local guide** who will introduce us to their quaint country town including the impressive historical buildings and rich history of the town. We then uncover one of the regions agricultural successes, **Cotton**. We will be guided around one of the many cotton farms where the cotton is picked and packed ready for transporting to the Cotton Gin. After time in town to purchase lunch (own expense), we spend the rest of the afternoon relaxing at the **Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre**.



Breakfast and dinner at the hotel Port Bus morning tea | Lunch Pack

\*Cotton tour subject to seasonality



### Day 7: (BLD)

### MOREE TO ARMIDALE

### Sunday 23 August 2026

From Artesian Waters to New England Charm, we take a scenic drive from the soothing artesian spas of Moree to the cool-climate elegance of Armidale. Time to reflect on the wonderful scenery and diverse landscapes we have encountered on this journey while we express through Bengara and Bundarra. On arrival into Uralla, we





visit **McCrossins Mill** where we have some time to take it all in, we then make our way to the **Uralla Bowling Club** for lunch. As we travel towards Armidale, we will notice cooler temperatures and heritage architecture, on arrival we can settle in for our last night on tour.

### Rydges Armidale | 1 night

Breakfast and dinner in motel | lunch at Uralla Bowling Club

## Day 8 (BL)

## ARMIDALE TO HOME

Monday 24 August 2026

With our bags packed full of memories we begin our travel day home. We travel east to view **Wollomombi Falls** then **Ebor Falls**. Viewing platforms at Ebor Falls provide us with dramatic views of the falls and the rugged country to the north. From here we travel onto Dorrigo where we enjoy lunch at the Heritage Hotel Motel. We arrive home later this afternoon after a fantastic holiday with friends.

Breakfast in motel | lunch at Heritage Hotel Motel, Dorrigo



## TOUR INCLUSIONS

- 7 night's motel accommodation
- 6 motel breakfasts and 1 out at Coogle Café Narrabri
- 6 motel dinners and 1 out at Narrabri RSL - Outback Shack
- 3 included lunches – see below
- Visit Pilliga Artesian Bore Bath
- Lunch pack from Nandewar Notor Inn
- Visit Walgett Water Tower
- Workshop visit, Talk on Opals and time in gallery at Down to Earth Opals
- Locally guided tour of Lightning Ridge
- Entry to Bottle House
- Lunch at Lightning Ridge Bowling Club
- Tour of the castle at Amigos Castle
- Visit Goodooga Artesian Springs
- Morning tea and comic tour of property and show at A Hidden Gem Bush Theatre
- Visit John Murray Art Gallery
- Entry to the Chambers of the Black Hand
- Entry to SPARK - cinema under the stars at Australian Opal Centre
- Lunch pack from Wallangulla Motel
- Visit Burren Junction Artesian Bore Bath
- Lunch pack from Wallangulla Motel
- Town tour, Morning tea and Cotton Farm & gin tour with O'Dempsey's Tours, Moree
- Lunch pack from Wallangulla Motel
- Visit Moree Artesian Aquatic Centre
- Lunch at the Uralla Bowling Club
- Museum Admission and paintings talk at McCrossin's Mill, Uralla
- Lunch at Heritage Hotel Motel Dorrigo



## Confirmed Accommodation

- Nandewar Motor Inn, Narrabri (1 night)
- Wallangulla Motel, Lightning Ridge (3 nights)
- Artesian Spa Motel, Moree (2 nights)
- Rydges Armidale (1 night)

**\$4,159 pp twin | + \$920 pp single sup**  
**\$900 pp deposit**

## For more information or to book;

Phone 02 6583 3330  
Email: [admin@portbus.com.au](mailto:admin@portbus.com.au)  
Website: <https://www.portbus.com.au>  
Online @ <https://events.humanitix.com/artesian-drive-26>

## PLEASE NOTE

- Price is based on a minimum of 19 passengers. If numbers fall below 19 this tour *may* need to be recosted.
- Price is valid for above tour dates only and includes GST.
- Morning teas or afternoon teas are not included unless specified.
- ***The itinerary may be subject to change without notice. Whilst every effort is made to adhere to the itinerary as provided. Port Bus reserves the right to alter the touring and attractions as dictated by circumstances and conditions outside the company's control. Alterations may be made to ensure the smooth running of the tour. Every attempt will be made to ensure alterations do not adversely affect the operation of the tour. Port Bus will not be held responsible for weather-based cancellations, or those closures made at the venue's discretion.***

## CANCELLATION POLICY

Cancellation fees will be levied relative to the amount of notice given:

42 days or more—loss of deposit

29-41 days: 50% of fare plus deposit

30 days before and the Day of departure: 100% of the fare.

Discover the Magic of the Outback!

# LIGHTNING RIDGE & MOREE

## ARTESIAN DRIVE TOUR

17-24 AUGUST 2026

Opals & Quirky Art

Stanley the Emu

Amigos Castle

Relaxing Artesian Baths

Walgett Water Tower

Underground Wonders Chambers of the Black Hand

SPARK

Cotton Farm Tour

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