

Visitor Itineraries – “Bathurst Remembers WW2 Exhibition”

The exhibition runs from Friday 13 August to Monday 16 August, 9am-5pm (9am-4pm Monday)

Quick Information

- Held at the iconic Bathurst Showground
- 1000+ enlarged photos “Snapshots of World War 2”
- Includes the “Wall of Valour – 130 enlarged images of World War 2 Servicemen and Women with an association with Bathurst who enlisted and served”.
- Many of the images have come from family collections and have never been on public display.
- Guest Exhibitors will display over 3,000 military items and WW2 memorabilia, uniforms, a WW2 model railway, military vehicles, medals, RAAF & POW items, a rustic military picture theatre, and more.

Ideas/Travel Itineraries

There are far too many experiences on offer in the region to explore over a single weekend. Given the important nature of this Exhibition, we have put together a series of itineraries with a focus on the impact of past wars upon the towns, villages and citizens of the region. For further information or suggestions, visit www.bathurstregion.com.au, call 1800 68 1000 or visit the Bathurst Visitor Information Centre at 1 Kendall Avenue Bathurst.

2-Day Itinerary

The Exhibition

The largest event of its type in regional NSW. The exhibition will be open to the public on Friday 13th, Saturday 14th, VJ Day Sunday 15th and Monday 16th August with opening hours from 9am to 5pm. The exhibition will consist of “Snapshots of World War 2” – 1,000 enlarged or PowerPoint photos of battlefields, training, home front, etc., and the “Wall of Valour - World War 2 Servicemen and Women with an association with Bathurst who enlisted” with 130 enlarged photos. There will be some 3,000 military and WW2 items of memorabilia from guest exhibitors along with newsreels from the day and a military vehicle display from the Military Vehicle Group of NSW and other collectors. There will be a commemorative service on Sunday 15th by the Bathurst RSL Sub-Branch and other activities over the four days.

Bathurst War Memorial Carillon/Boer War Memorial

The Bathurst District Soldier's Memorial Carillon honours those who have served in all conflicts from the Great War to contemporary peacekeeping operations. The 30-metre-high structure houses the 47 bells that make up the instrument of the "Singing Tower", one of only three carillons in all Australia. The Carillon sits in the centre of King's Parade, close to the Boer War Memorial which includes the name of Peter Hancock who was executed by the British with "Breaker Morant".

Bathurst Rail Museum

Explore the stories of the railway and the impact that the railway had on the local region. The model railway is amazingly the size of a tennis court, a re-creation of the Bathurst to Tarana rail line. Discover the story of a proud Bathurst local, Ben Chifley, who worked as a railway engine driver then Minister for War and Prime Minister during WW2.

Bathurst District Historical Society

The Bathurst District Historical Society Museum, is the premier historical museum in the Central West of NSW. Along with the archives and Bookshop it is located in the East Wing of the heritage listed Bathurst Courthouse.

The Museum tells the story of the rich history and heritage of Bathurst and the surrounding area, including objects that document important regional developments such as the growth of the garrison town, contact with explorers and surveyors, the first gold discovery in NSW, the formulation of Cobb and Co., and the region's colourful bushranging history.

There is a selection of memorabilia acquired from long term resident of Bathurst, Joseph Benedict Chifley (1885-1951), Australia's 16th Prime Minister, and the Penzig Collection which comprises paintings, pictures, drawings, objects and costumes. Displays are changed regularly to showcase the Society's collection of over 8,000 objects – some large, some small but all interesting and with a story to tell.

Visit Oberon & Mayfield Garden

In the midst of dramatic natural landscapes that give way to a mosaic of pine forests and rolling farmlands, lies Oberon, a small rural community with a population of 3700. Situated on a plateau at a height of 1130m above sea level, the area is popular for its cool summers, snowy winters and its four distinct seasons. Oberon is one of the first genuine rural communities west of the Blue Mountains and is still dependent on its rural industries. Oberon has its own alpine lake and enjoys a great sense of community spirit. <https://www.visitoberon.com/>

Mayfield Garden

Inspired by the great gardens of Europe, Mayfield Garden has to be seen to be believed. 65 hectares of magic that has all been constructed from the ground up to

become truly one of the greatest cool-climate gardens of the world. Only 30 minutes from Bathurst, and 10 minutes from Oberon.

Oberon Military Museum

The Oberon Military Museum is a magnificent collection that acknowledges the service of many from our region and includes an array of weapons from World War 1 to the present. Also on display are medals awarded to our Australian Armed Forces. Outside the museum stands The Light Horse sculpture, created by local talented artist and sculptor, Harrie Fasher.

Oberon & District Museum

The Oberon and District Museum was established in 1989. It holds an interesting and varied collection of artefacts and memorabilia, including a 3D model of the township as it was in the 1930s. It has a functioning blacksmith's shop, an array of old farming equipment and a very old, Oberon weatherboard cottage (circa 1887) with furniture filled rooms depicting how life was lived in those early years. There is also a huge array of photos, as well as an extensive collection of local family history.

OTHR Museum

Formed in 2006, Oberon Tarana Heritage Railway Inc. is a group of railway enthusiasts dedicated to bringing Oberon's rail history back to life by restoring the Oberon-Tarana branch line and running trains similar to those in service on the railway in days gone by. In the early 1880s, the Oberon Railway League lobbied the State Government for a branch line to be constructed to run from Tarana to Oberon and on to Burruga to service the copper mines there. Finally, in October 1923, the line was opened. It only went as far as Oberon, as by the time construction was completed, the copper mines at Burruga had ceased operations.

3-Day Itinerary

As per two-day itinerary plus:

Visit Lithgow via Tarana

The Lithgow destination encompasses a multitude of historical experiences, you can explore historic towns and villages steeped in history. Visit the only inland heavy anti-aircraft gun batteries of their type in NSW. Lithgow is home to the towering remains of Australia's first modern blast furnace. Lithgow State Mine Heritage Park is the site of the first State Government owned coal mine. Portland is known as the 'town that built Sydney' and contains the old cement works is now known as 'The Foundations'. Historic Railway infrastructure abounds throughout the destination including the 1869 Zig Zag Railway viaducts. The National Small Arms Factory, still operating today 100 years on, was the first modern manufacturing plant in Australia and the popular Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum holds the largest collection of small arms in the country. <https://tourism.lithgow.com/>

From Bathurst, it is recommended to take the Tarana Road to enjoy delightful country scenery as well as to pass through the historic villages of Brewongle and Tarana. Whilst in Tarana, the “**Tarana First and Second World Wars Memorial**” near the railway station provides a moving reminder of the commitment to these conflicts made by rural villages, and of the shattering impact of loss of so high a proportion of their young men to war.

Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum

The history of the Lithgow Small Arms Factory is about people - their aspirations, achievements and disappointments, the economic and social hardships endured, the influence of our British heritage upon Australia in the early 1900s, and sheer human stubbornness. It is also about the introduction of new technologies into the emerging new nation. Lithgow SAF was Australia's first high precision mass production facility. This Museum was formed to celebrate its history.

Situated on the existing Factory site, this unique museum is widely recognised for its comprehensive collection of modern firearms from around the world, but more than that, it is a showcase of Australian manufacturing. Displays show the production processes and social history of this renowned facility. Visitors are astounded by the myriad of commercial items produced which provided the Factory's lifeblood between wars and preserved the valuable skills of its workforce.

Bowenfels Gun Emplacements

Lithgow's [Bowenfels Gun Emplacement](#) is the only known inland heavy anti-aircraft gun emplacement of its type in NSW.

The Gun Emplacements were constructed during World War II to protect Lithgow's important mining, manufacturing and transport industries as well as the Small Arms Factory. Following the entry of Japan into World War II and improvements in aircraft technology there were growing concerns about the vulnerability of inland areas. The guns were never fired during the war and have since suffered from exposure to the elements for many years.

The Bowenfels Gun Emplacements have State Historical significance as an important part of the World War II network of defences of Lithgow.

4 Day Itinerary

As per three-day itinerary plus:

Visit Cowra (only 1hour 15 min drive)

At 1.50 am on the clear moonlit night of August 5, 1944, the largest Prisoner of War breakout in modern military history occurred at Cowra. More than 1000 Japanese prisoners launched a mass 'suicide attack' on their guards, Australian soldiers of the 22nd Garrison. Armed with crude weapons, four groups each of approximately 300 Japanese threw themselves on to barbed wire fences and into the firing line of Vickers machine guns. Protected only by baseball mitts, blankets, and coats and using their comrades as a human bridge to cross the tangled barbed wire, more than 350 Japanese clawed their way to freedom.

All escapees were captured during the following week. A total of 107 POWs were wounded, 234 died along with 5 Australian soldiers.

From the tragedy of war and the Cowra Breakout came a long-lasting friendship between the people of Cowra and the nation of Japan. There is much in Cowra today which serves as a reminder to these events. <https://visitcowra.com.au/>

Cowra Visitor Information Centre

The POW Hologram Theatre, located within the Cowra Visitor Information Centre, tells the story of the Cowra Breakout and its aftermath. The P.O.W. Theatre is a 9-minute hologram that recounts the tragic story of the Cowra Breakout in 1944. The theatre is housed in a small tin replica of a hut found at the Cowra Prisoner of War Camp during World War II. The hologram tells the story of the Cowra Breakout through the eyes of Claire, a young Cowra local. The presentation is aimed at raising awareness of the historical significance of Cowra in modern military history and to encourage visitation to other local attractions and locations of historical importance.

Cowra Japanese Gardens

Visit the multi-award-winning Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre. Opened in 1979, the Garden is a 'must-see' at any time of the year.

The Cowra Japanese Garden & Cultural Centre is a tangible monument to peace and reconciliation between two countries. The principal object and purpose of the Cowra Japanese Garden and Cultural Centre is the promotion of Japanese design including landscape, garden and built form design, Japanese crafts, Japanese movable cultural heritage and to support and advance the cultural relations between the people of the Cowra Shire in New South Wales and the people of Japan.

War Cemetery

Established in 1964, this is the only Japanese War Cemetery to be retained in Australia. There are 523 graves at the Japanese War Cemetery, containing the remains of the 231 Japanese soldiers who were killed in the 1944 Cowra Breakout and all other Japanese Nationals who died on Australian soil during World War II.

Driving times from Bathurst Post Office

Bathurst Showground	10min walk
Tarana	35 min

Lithgow	50min
Cowra	1hr 15min
Bowenfels	50min
Oberon	35min
Mayfield Gardens	35 min