

**MAP KEY**

Destination	Public Toilets
Scenery / Attractions	Accommodation
Cafés & Restaurants	Information Centre

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Paradise Rock Photo courtesy of NSW National Parks & Wildlife

## New England High Country

Drop into the Armidale, Guyra, Uralla and Walcha Visitor Information Centres for more information on New England High Country.

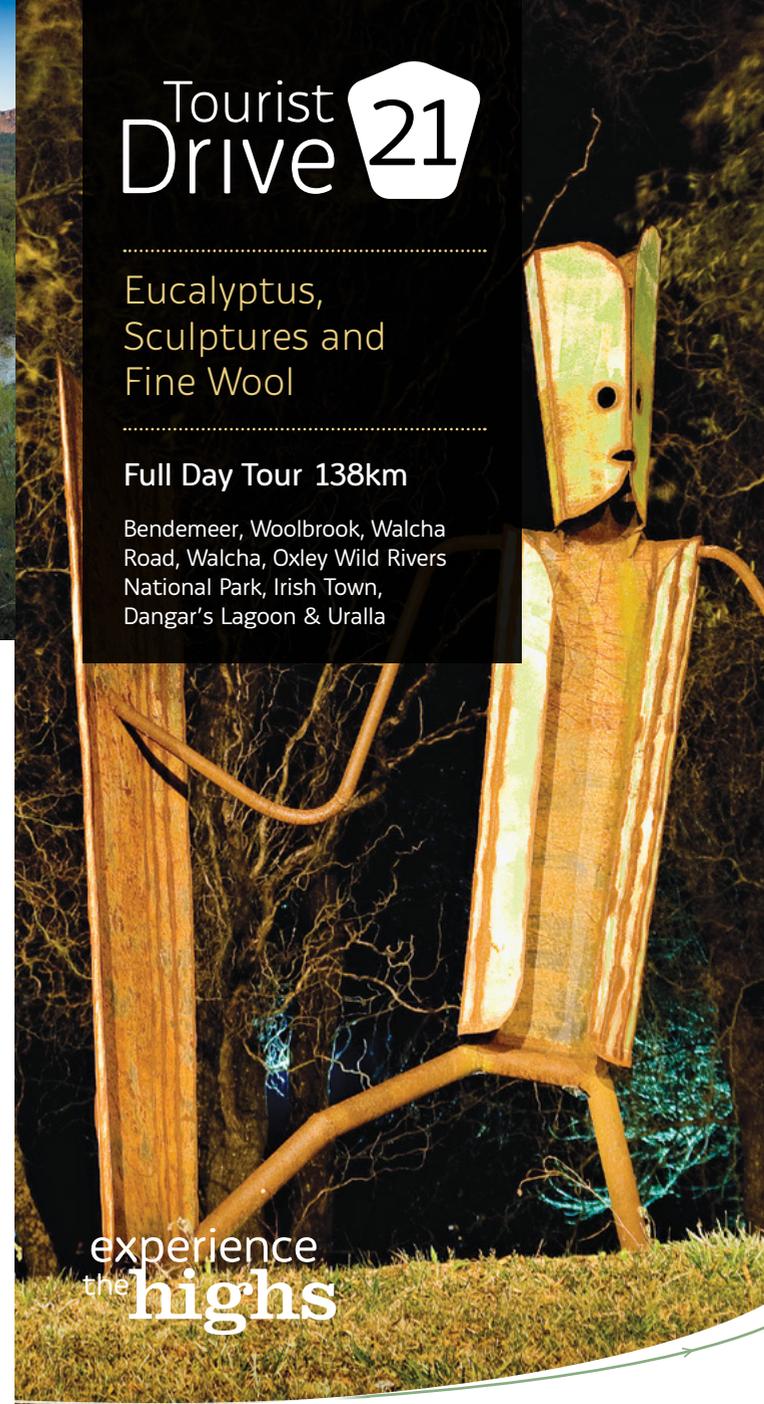
- i Armidale Visitor Information Centre**  
82 Marsh Street  
Armidale NSW 2350  
(02) 6770 3888  
[tourism@armidale.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tourism@armidale.nsw.gov.au)  
[www.armidaletourism.com.au](http://www.armidaletourism.com.au)
- i Uralla Visitor Information Centre**  
104 Bridge Street  
Uralla NSW 2358  
(02) 6778 6420  
[visit@uralla.com](mailto:visit@uralla.com)  
[www.uralla.com](http://www.uralla.com)
- i Guyra Visitor Information Centre**  
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[www.guyra.nsw.gov.au](http://www.guyra.nsw.gov.au)
- i Walcha Visitor Information Centre**  
51W Fitzroy Street  
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# Tourist Drive 21

Eucalyptus, Sculptures and Fine Wool

Full Day Tour 138km

Bendemeer, Woolbrook, Walcha Road, Walcha, Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, Irish Town, Dangar's Lagoon & Uralla



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**New England High Country**



Dangar's Lagoon

## 📍 URALLA TO BENDEMEER

This scenic route commences from Uralla and may be explored in either direction - south on the New England Highway to Bendemeer, or by taking Thunderbolt's Way south to Walcha.

For convenience we will describe the route starting with the New England Highway, where a leisurely drive takes travellers down the New England plateau past wooded hillsides and open paddocks accommodating sheep and cattle.

Some 40km south of Uralla on the right is **Banalasta 1**, a property that grows its own grapes, eucalyptus and lavender. An excellent visitor centre provides an opportunity to stop over for a tea or coffee break and inspect the very large range of products made from their home grown list. These include wines, eucalyptus lozenges, lavender sachets and a multitude of skin care products. They will even show you how to extract the various essential oils from eucalyptus leaves and lavender grasses. Open daily, during summer from 9.30am to 4.30pm, and 10.00am to 4.00pm in winter.

A further 12km south is the old coach stop of **Bendemeer 2**. The coach and horses have long gone but the village remains as a reminder of those days. Drop into the famous pub for a short break or enjoy lunch, after a swim with the locals in the lazily flowing McDonald River. Drive slowly around the village and savour the feeling of days gone by.

## 📍 BENDEMEER TO WOOLBROOK

Leaving Bendemeer, take the Oxley Highway due east some 20km to the **Woolbrook 3** turn off on your right. Woolbrook is a tiny hamlet nestled amongst shady trees. Here you can take time out to throw a line into the McDonald River to catch a mountain trout, or cool off at a swimming spot.

Woolbrook has some great old houses and sandstone block architecture, which fits aptly with the ambience of the town.

## 📍 WOOLBROOK TO WALCHA ROAD

A further 11km on, a left hand turn leads to the **Walcha Road Hotel 4** (before the bridge in Walcha Road). This original and beautiful hotel dates back to 1860, but has recently been rebuilt following a fire in 2004.

During rebuilding, the owners displayed their inventiveness by importing an old railway carriage to serve as a new bar and bistro. An appropriate acquisition, as this was always a rail stop patronised by rail workers and itinerant workers alike. Walcha Road was the main transport hub for most agricultural goods including timber, sheep and cattle leaving the Walcha district, and is now used for a daily return service from Sydney to Armidale.

## 📍 WALCHA ROAD TO WALCHA

The township of **Walcha 5**, 20km east of the Walcha Road Hotel, is the gateway to the **Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, Apsley and Tia Falls 6** and the World Heritage listed **Werrikimbe National Park 7**.

Call into the Walcha Visitor Information Centre for more information on the region's national parks.

Walcha (pronounced Wolka) was the first town to be settled in the New England region by Europeans back in 1818, with the arrival of John Oxley. It became a major sheep and cattle producing area, along with the gold rush in the 1870s and the timber-getters with their bullock teams.

Today's Walcha produces a great and varied amount of primary products, including some of Australia's finest wool, fat lambs, beef and cattle. Timber production still plays a vital role in the economy of the district.

Created by local, national and international artists, over 40 sculptures are spread around the town and along the Apsley River levee banks. Pick up a copy of the Open Air Gallery brochure and spend some time exploring the array of unique artworks.

Walcha has a great variety of accommodation, including farmstays, bed & breakfasts, caravan park, motel and hotels. Visit the **Pioneer Cottage and Museum Complex 8** and antique shop. Please contact the Walcha Visitor Information Centre for opening hours.

## 📍 WALCHA TO URALLA

The 41km of road from Walcha to **Uralla 9** follows the original pioneer track north, along which you will pass the locality of **Irish Town 10** about 5km from Walcha.

This was an Irish settlement with market gardens and the Irish families that lived here helped on the many larger properties (sheep runs) back in the mid 1800s. Today, an abandoned slab hut and small farm is all that remains, along with a few hawthorn trees.

Travelling further north along Thunderbolt's Way, there are many properties and famous Merino sheep studs which were settled by squatters in the early 1800s. Most notable amongst these are

Yalgoo, Miramoona, Merani, Petali and Terrible Vale, whose name possibly derives from a battle between aboriginal tribes prior to European settlement, where much blood was shed, leaving only a very few survivors.

**Dangar's Lagoon 11** with its bird hide can be seen on your right about 10km further up the road. This natural pond has been dammed up, originally by the Chinese gold miners and again later when it was enlarged and used as a reservoir.

Today, it is a protected wetlands reserve for the local bird life. A bird hide located at the southern end of the lagoon houses a useful illustrated display of birds that can be spotted from time to time in the lagoon.

On arrival in Uralla, be sure to visit **McCrossin's Mill Museum 12** home of Thunderbolt memorabilia and local history, or spend time enjoying the heritage streetscape, unique shops, galleries and cafés.

