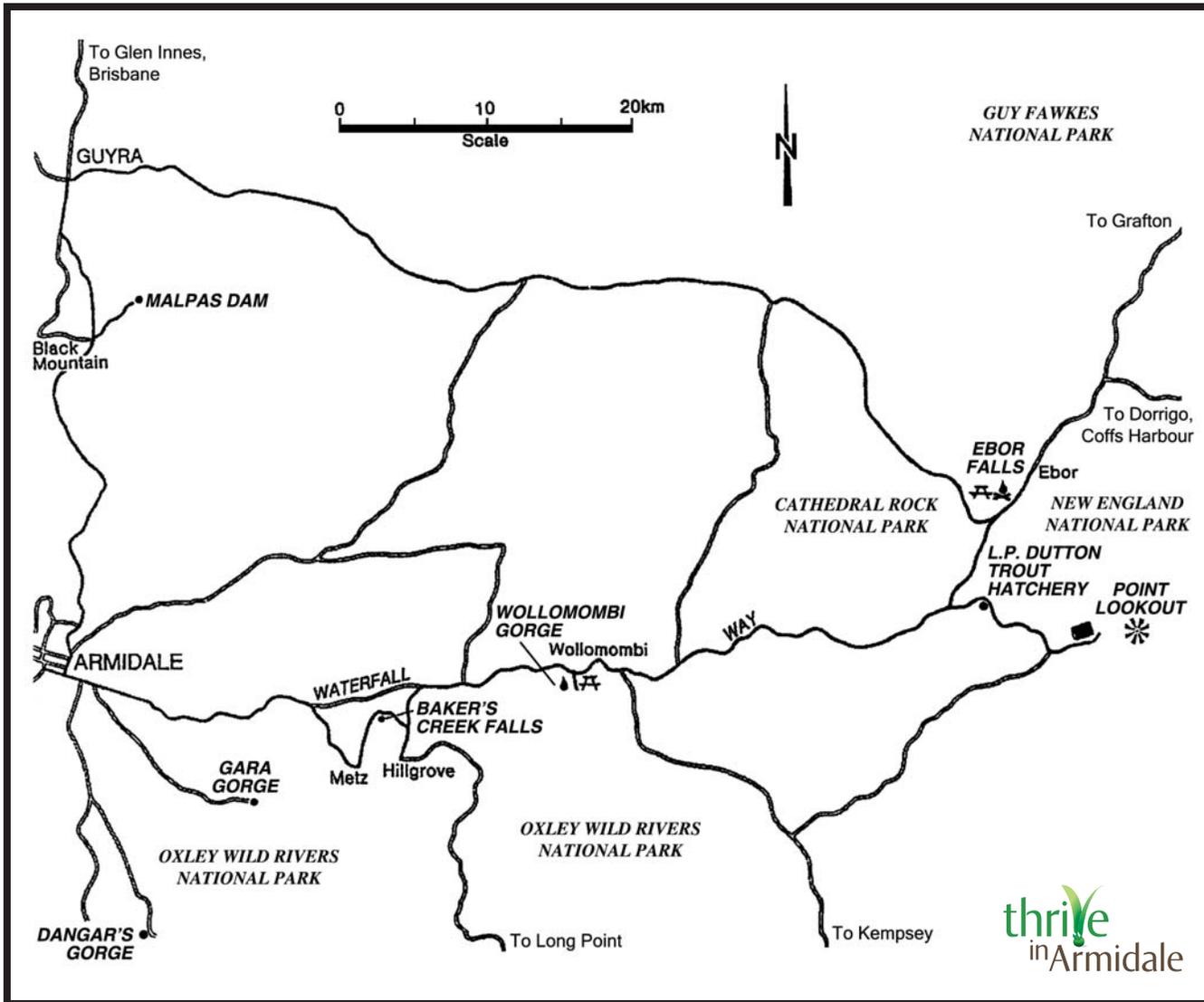


scenic drive 17

The best of New England



Armidale Visitor Information Centre

82 Marsh Street
 Armidale NSW 2350
 Phone: (02) 6772 4655
 Email: armvisit@bigpond.net.au
 www.armidaletourism.com.au

Guyra Visitor Information

Guyra Shire Council
 158 Bradley Street
 Guyra NSW 2365
 Phone: (02) 6779 1577
 Em: tourism@guyra.nsw.gov.au
 www.guyra.nsw.gov.au

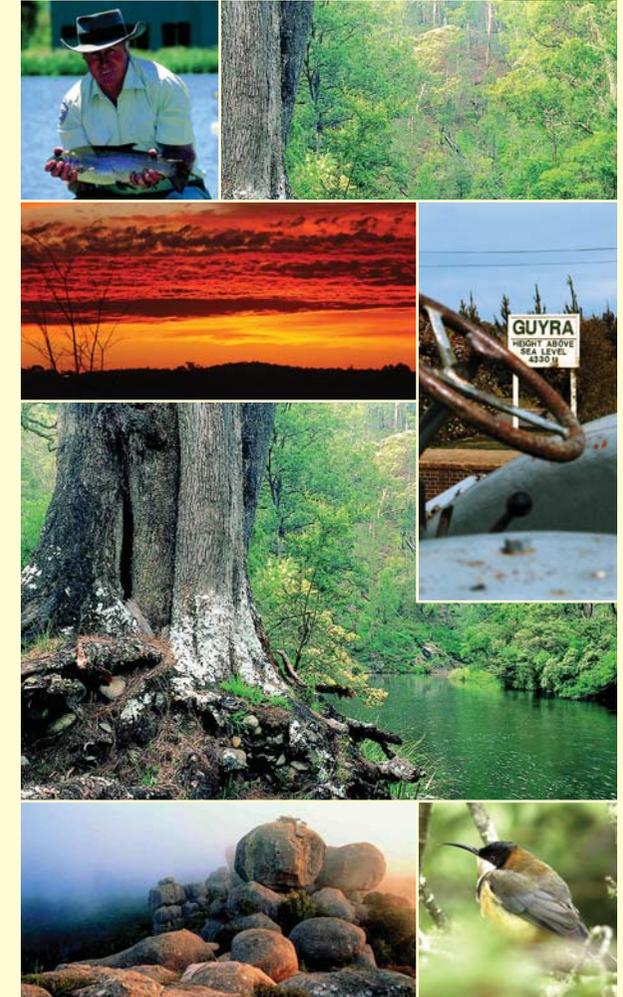
Uralla Visitor Information Centre

104 Bridge Street
 Uralla NSW 2358
 Phone: (02) 6778 4496
 Email: visit@uralla.com
 www.uralla.com

Walcha Visitor Information Centre

Fitzroy Street
 Walcha NSW 2354
 Phone: (02) 6774 2460
 Em: council@walcha.nsw.gov.au
 www.walchansw.com.au

Drop into the Armidale, Uralla and Walcha Visitor Information Centres or Guyra Council for more information on the beautiful New England region.



Full Day Tour 245km (15.5km unsealed)

Gara Gorge, Hillgrove, Wollomombi Gorge, New England National Park, Trout Hatchery, Cathedral Rock National Park, Ebor Falls & Guyra

ARMIDALE TO GARA GORGE

Commencing at the Visitor Information Centre, turn left into Dumaresq Street then right into Marsh Street and head south until the traffic lights (.7km), then turn left into Barney Street/ Waterfall Way. Continue heading east for 2km to Castledoyle Road, the second road on the right. This will lead to **Gara Gorge**, part of **Oxley Wild Rivers National Park**. Follow Castledoyle Road for 16km to reach the Gorge. **Gara Gorge** is a popular picnic spot, well known for its scenic bush strolls and swimming holes. It is also the site of Australia's first commercial Hydro-electric Scheme. The remains of this historic scheme can be viewed via the **Threlfall Historic Walk**, a 5km return loop walk.

GARA GORGE TO METZ & HILLGROVE

Return along the Castledoyle Road, turning right on to the Waterfall Way. Continue heading east through the rolling country of New England. Approximately 20km east, take the Baker's Creek turn off to the right and follow this road to Baker's Creek Falls. The view at **Baker's Creek Falls** is the first taste of the many beautiful New England streams that tumble and cascade off the edge of the high country, forming the source of the great coastal rivers systems of northern NSW. Continue heading towards Hillgrove.

Both **Metz and Hillgrove** were once thriving towns that serviced the mines that brought thousands to this gorge in the latter part of the 1800's. The **Hillgrove Rural Life and Industry Museum**, Scouler Street, Hillgrove, is housed in the 1896 Hillgrove School building.

The museum contains an excellent historic photograph display, mining equipment and rural industries exhibit. These provide an insight into the life of the once prosperous gold mining towns of Hillgrove and Metz.

Also stop and discover the history of Hillgrove at several special display signs located throughout the village.

Museum open Friday to Monday 10am to 5pm.

Follow Stockton Road from Hillgrove, back to the Waterfall Way (approximately 5km).

HILLGROVE TO WOLLOMOMBI GORGE

From the Hillgrove exit, the next stop is 11.8km along the Waterfall Way. Turn right at the Wollomombi Gorge sign and drive into the national park car parking area. **Wollomombi** and **Chandler Falls** are part of the rugged and spectacular **Oxley Wild Rivers National Park**. Wollomombi Falls are a sheer drop of 220 meters, making it Australia's second highest falls. Viewing platforms are a short walk from the parking area and there are excellent picnic and camping facilities nearby.

WOLLOMOMBI GORGE TO NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL PARK

Return to the Waterfall Way T intersection and turn right. Continue heading east along Waterfall Way for approximately 29km and take the right hand turn off to New England National Park.

4km along the road is the **LP Dutton Trout Hatchery**. The trout hatched here are used to stock the many local streams, making New England one of Australia's best known trout fishing areas. The hatchery is open to the public and offers an audiovisual show, aquarium display, group and self-guided tours, hand feeding of the fish, free picnic and barbecue facilities.

Open daily 9am to 4pm. Small admission fee applies.

Continue on for 9.5km to **New England National Park**, Australia's second oldest park, covering over 300,000 hectares of wilderness. The park has a remarkable diversity of tree and plant life – from snow gum eucalypt forest to temperate and sub tropical rainforest and Antarctic beech forest. **Point Lookout** offers a spectacular panoramic view of the Bellinger Valley that extends over 70km towards the Coast.

The park offers many well-marked and maintained walks, a picnic shelter, toilets, cabin accommodation and camping facilities that allow the visitor to enjoy the park all year round.

Cabins can be booked by contacting the National Parks and Wildlife Service in Dorrigo. Phone: (02) 6657 2309.

NEW ENGLAND NATIONAL PARK TO CATHEDRAL ROCK NATIONAL PARK

Return to the Waterfall Way and continue east. 8km further on there is a left hand turn off to **Cathedral Rock National Park**. Cathedral Rock is a fascinating national park with magnificent granite Tors, formed about 230 million years ago. It is an excellent park for bushwalking with camping grounds available. Camping grounds can be accessed from either the Waterfall Way or the Ebor/Guyra Road.

CATHEDRAL ROCK NATIONAL PARK TO EBOR FALLS

From Cathedral Rock National Park, continue east along Waterfall Way and turn right at the T intersection towards Ebor. Approximately 4kms further on take the left hand turn off to **Ebor Falls**. Ebor Falls are cascading falls, having an upper and lower set of falls. Short walks to viewing platforms for both sets are well marked and maintained. The township of **Ebor**, just past the turn off to the falls, provides hotel/motel and cottage accommodation, general store and garage facilities.

RETURN TO ARMIDALE

From Ebor, you have a choice of two return journeys to Armidale - either return along the Waterfall Way or continue the loop along the Ebor/Guyra Road (approximately 78.5km) rejoining the New England Highway at Guyra.

The Ebor/Guyra Road goes through some of New England's finest pastoral country. On reaching **Guyra**, explore the town and then it is only a short 37km drive south along the New England Highway back to Armidale.

On the route is **Malpas Dam**, the local water supply and water recreational dam (no powerboats allowed) and Thunderbolt's Cave – once the hideout of the infamous bushranger, both turn offs are on your left. Continue back to Armidale to complete the scenic drive.

Please Note: *The level of water flow over the waterfalls varies with weather conditions.*