

# Destination

## THE CORNER LOOP

### New South Wales

**There are several travel options around the Corner Country: our chosen circuit takes in the drive from Tibooburra out to the three-State border at Cameron Corner, returns to Middle Road, runs east to the Jump Up Loop Road and then south to Tibooburra.**



It's possible to do this 320km trip in a day, in good weather, but an overnight stop or two along the way makes the journey much more rewarding. Camp grounds with gas BBQs, water and drop dunnies at Fort Grey, The Corner Store and Olive Downs are the obvious overnight stops. The road from Tibooburra to the Corner is well maintained gravel for the most part, but it becomes progressively more sandy after Fort Grey. The next leg runs through dune country and there are numerous blind crests that require caution.

The Dog Fence runs along the State borders and it's essential that the gate at the Corner Store be kept closed.

Middle Road is less maintained than the Tibooburra-Cameron Corner road, but is easily handed by a soft-roader in good weather. After rain, some of the lower-lying sections can become boggy. Middle Road joins the Tibooburra-Toona Gate Road for a few kilometres, before heading northeast once more and closing right on the Queensland border, just north of Olive Downs. The track parallels the Dog Fence for a few hundred metres, before swinging south.

Not far south of Olive Downs camp ground is one of the highlights of the Corner Loop drive: the road crests a rocky ridge in the Grey Range and opens up a vista of the Jump Up country. This section is nearly always closed after heavy rain, because it runs along the banks of Connia Creek and Mile Creek.

Middle Road intersects the Silver City Highway, just north of Tibooburra and, on the eastern side of the main road becomes the Gorge Loop Road. This track runs down Mile Creek and is weather-sensitive.



Tibooburra is the aboriginal word for 'heaps of rocks' and there could hardly be a more appropriate name for the town. For 25,000 years the Wangkumara and Maljangapa groups have roamed through this rocky region. Aboriginal sites including camp sites, ceremonial sites, tool productions sites and scarred trees are scattered throughout the area.

The explorer Sturt was followed by Burke and Wills, who passed through the district on their ill-fated expedition in 1860.

The town sprang up after the discovery of gold at Mt Browne, near Milparinka, and then at Tibooburra itself in 1881, but yields were somewhat disappointing and the town soon languished. However the local sandstone had proved to be an excellent building material for the necessary structures that sprang up in support of the growing community.

The lack of water was a chronic problem and that, along with regular bouts of drought, typhoid and dysentery, combined to limit the size of the town.

Tibooburra is home to the most remote Outback School of the Air location - the only one that doubles as a face-to-face school.

'Milparinka' is a corruption of the local Aboriginal word for 'water may be found here' and the nearby waterholes have been frequented by wandering Aborigines for thousands of years.

The explorer Charles Sturt was the first white man to pass through the area, in 1845, on his way to find the anticipated inland sea. Australia's inward-flowing rivers surely meant that there must be a central sea into which they flowed and so convinced of this was Sturt that he hauled a whaleboat on wheels with him.

Sturt was forced to camp at nearby Depot Glen for six months, awaiting drought-breaking rain to replenish his depleted water supplies. During this enforced stay Sturt's second in command, James Poole, died of scurvy and was buried beside a grevillea that still bears the blaze mark and the initials 'JP'.

Not far from Depot Glen is a cairn that Sturt had built by his party, ostensibly to mark the waterhole for their return journey, but which was probably intended more to keep the men busy.



Blaze tree James Poole's grave



By 1889 Milparinka boasted a newspaper office, police station, court house, two butcher shops, a school, a hospital and four pubs.

Today the most prominent remaining buildings are the Albert Hotel (below) and the fully restored court house and police barracks (left). One of the banks still stands in the main street.

**Minimum time needed in the Corner Country – one week.**



**Bridgestone's  
Dueler 694 A/T**  
is our tyre choice  
for this trek

**BRIDGESTONE**  
Your Journey, Our Passion

