

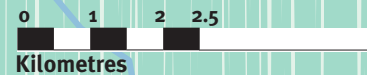
### Legend

- Sealed Road
- Gravelled Road
- Dirt Track
- Rivers
- National Park
- All Facilities
- Fuel
- Accommodation
- Food
- Camp Sites
- Rest Area
- Fossicking

### Drive Routes

- Route of the River Gums
- The Dinosaur Drive
- Try Your Luck
- Pioneer's Trail

*All of the walks and drives are clockwise return loops starting from the Winton Visitor Information Centre. Points of interest are listed as kilometres, so set your trip meter to zero as you arrive at the town grid on the Winton/Jundah Road.*



## Route of the River Gum and Bladensburg National Park

*From the shade of Surprise Creek; river red gums and coolibahs, you can view the vast plains of Mitchell and Flinders grass. Flat topped mesas, plateaus and residual sandstone ranges provide a scenic backdrop to Bladensburg National Park. Formerly a grazing property, Bladensburg was designated as a National Park in 1994. The park conserves 85,000 ha of Mitchell grass and channel country, a number of scenic waterholes and culturally significant sites. The park is home to a wonderful diversity of birds, including Emu, Brolga, Australian Bustard, Hall's Babbler, Spotted Bowerbird and Singing Bushlark. Look for Red Kangaroos on the open Mitchell grasslands, Eastern Grey Kangaroos in the lower creeks and Wallaroos in the mesa areas.*



1894 Shearers' Strike Memorial

- 0.0km
- Visitor Information Centre

Set your trip odometer to zero at the town grid on the Winton-Jundah Road. Enjoy your experience.

- 1.5km / 49.5km
- 22.4027 South 143.0393 East
- Western River

The braided intermittent creeks you are crossing are part of the Western River and are typical of channel country in Outback Queensland. The catchment for Winton and the Western River, forms part of the Great Artesian Basin and drains 1500km towards Lake Eyre North. The attractive grey-green leaved tree is *Eucalyptus Microtheca* or 'Coolibah'. It is one of these that the swaggie camped under in the song Waltzing Matilda. Can you remember the lines "...under the shade of a "coolibah" tree..."? Other plants that inhabit these creeks are Black Wattle and Prickly Acacia. When the town was gazetted in the "Government Gazette" on the 5th of July, 1879, the Western River formed part of its boundary. During floods, the river becomes many times wider and floods the lower sections of town.

- 1.9km / 49.5km
- 22.4027 South 143.0393 East
- Long Waterhole, bike track and rodeo yards turn off (4.5 km round trip)

Long Waterhole is man-made and was once used during the Outback Festival as the site for the biennial World Crayfish Derby. It is a popular camping and picnic spot and is great for bird watching and fishing. A bike track designed for motorbikes runs around the waterhole.

The rodeo yards were built in 1978 by keen rodeo enthusiasts who ride the bulls, steers and horses for fun! World champion buck-jumping rider, Ray Hermann, often practised in these yards.

- 3.3km / 48.1km
- 22.4169 South 143.0338 East
- Mistake Creek

Mistake Creek is the scene of the murder of a young boy in the 1800s. By 1895 this area supported nine Chinese market gardens producing a complete range of fresh fruit and vegetables for the township. The Cragg Family Bridge at Mistake Creek is named to honour this pioneering family who lived here until the 1950s. It is a good picnic and fishing area, Yellowbelly are often caught in the creek.

- 5.5km / 45.9km
- 22.4335 South 143.0257 East
- Western Picnic Race Club

The first Picnic Race Club in the area was the Never Never Jockey Club. It is believed that this is the first time the term 'never never'

was used in Outback Australia. A silver trophy, The Corinthian Cup, won in 1879 is displayed at the Waltzing Matilda Centre, and the race was again contested at the Waltzing Matilda Centenary celebrations in 1995. Picnic Races are amateur horse races and the horse must only be grass fed. The first race meeting was held on April 27 and 28, 1922.

- 6.7km / 44.7km
- 22.4367 South 142.0318 East
- Bladensburg National Park turn off

Turn left and follow signs to Bladensburg National Park. The road initially passes through the town common where stock graze at the owner's risk.

- 9.0km / 42.4km
- 22.4548 South 143.0032 East
- Red Creek

Just after Red Creek, note the Gidyea trees, a species of Acacia. This very hard wood is used extensively for rural fence posts and is excellent fuel for camp fires. The Aborigines used Gidyea to make boomerangs, a faulty boomerang still contained in a tree trunk may be seen in the Qantilda Museum. Apostle birds (also known as Lousy Jacks because of lice) frequent this creek area.

- 9.7km / 41.7km
- 22.4604 South 143.0020 East
- 1894 Shearers' Strike Memorial

Turn left to the memorial built by the Winton branch of the ALP and the Winton and District Historical Society in 1975. It was here that 500 shearers camped during the strike of 1891 and 1894, when Winton was under martial law. This was the beginning of the foundation of the Australian Labour Party. More Gidyea trees surround this area.

- 11.6km / 39.8km
- 22.4779 South 143.0030 East
- Bladensburg National Park Headquarters turn-off

The left hand road leads to the National Park Information Centre and original homestead buildings. Keep to the right hand road to continue on the Route of the River Gum.

- 12.4km / 39.0km
- 22.4845 South 143.0027 East
- Bladensburg National Park entry grid

Typical tree species in this area are Bloodwood, Bauhinia (with butterfly shaped leaves) and Mimosa (a prickly shrub weed). Bladensburg was first taken up in 1874 by Henry Cory, and registered on March 18, 1875 in the name of Euston Blomfield. In 1891, J.A. McCartney owned the property and ran 10, 000 head of cattle. The Park was purchases in 1993 by Queensland Parks and Wildlife and is yet to be fully developed.



Bladensburg Waterhole

- 13.9km / 37.5km
- 22.4982 South 143.0053 East
- Claypans

The claypans are flat areas along the creek. The surface is white, smooth and hard, and no vegetation grows except in the wet season. Because of the claypans, rain runs into waterholes as freely as if it were running off an iron roof. Half an inch of rain quickly fills nearby waterholes. In early days, drovers driving cattle across the dry country would follow the storms, knowing that water would be trapped in the claypans. You will see another claypan just across the grid to Engine Hole.

- 17.2km / 34.2km
- 22.5274 South 143.0044 East
- Engine Hole

Turn right to get to Engine Hole, a horse-shoe-shaped waterhole with white gums along the banks. Once the site of brick manufacturing, it is now a popular place for picnics and swimming.

- 20.0km / 31.4km
- 22.5437 South 142.9921 East
- Little Jump Up

A 'jump up' is a local term to describe this steeply rising landscape. Stop at the top of the rise and look back along the way you have travelled; you will be amazed at how far you can see because of the flatness of the country. The Vindex Range is to the east. Wildlife in this area includes red and grey kangaroo, wallaroo, emu, plains turkey and wild pigs.

The peculiar spiky bush growing to about 60 – 70cm tall is spinifex. Spinifex has very little leaf so it sends up long vertical spikes covered with a waxy coating to prevent moisture loss. Spinifex fires are easily recognized because of the black smoke. The flowers are eaten by stock, and old bushman say that a bed of spinifex upside down and covered with a blanket is as good as an inner spring mattress! If you watch, you may see a Spinifex Pigeon fly out.

- 20.1km / 31.3km
- 22.5446 South 142.9877 East
- Skull Hole turn off (4km round trip)

Skull Hole is about 2km if you turn onto the left track. This was the site of a massacre of aborigines in retaliation for the murder of a teamster. Sergeant Moran, then in charge of the Winton Police Station, proceeded to track the murderers. When attacked, he dealt punitive measures to his assailants. This climaxed at Skull Hole, where the tribe was massacred by black troopers. Note the caprock. During wet season, Skull Hole is filled by a waterfall.

You can see a blow hole, wattle trees, caves, bats and unusually shaped rocks if you walk either side of Skull Hole. Note the rock formation, and also the eucalypt tree growth – the bulbous base of trunk is due to difficulty establishing root growth. A good place for a picnic and bird watching. To continue, return to Skull Hole turn off and turn left.

- 23.6km / 27.8km
- 22.5653 South 142.9626 East
- Bough Shed Intersection

Turn right to visit a popular camping, swimming and picnic spot on Surprise Creek – an ideal place for lunch. Bush toilets are available but be advised that there is no drinking water available.

- 23.9km / 27.5km
- 22.5663 South 142.9602 East
- Top Crossing

Drive over the solid rock bottom of Surprise Creek (a dry crossing except immediately following rain). If you want a refreshing swim stop at this rocky creek crossing. During the rain, water swirls through the area and fills the waterholes until the next wet. If you are here at sunrise or sunset you will see many birds and animals watering.

- 24.1km / 27.3km
- 22.5670 South 142.9582 East
- Beefwood Trees

Beefwood trees are resistant to termites.

- 24.8km / 26.6km
- 22.5693 South 142.9520 East
- Richard Cragg's Grave

Roughly 1km along this track on the left you will see a lonely grave. Many early pioneers were buried in the unforgiving Outback. Richard Cragg was a mail contractor who died on December 30, 1888. He was only 46 years old. The cause of his death is unknown, although it is believed he was accidentally poisoned. Cragg came from Manchester in England, with his wife and seven children, some of his descendants still live in the Winton area.

- 25.4km / 26.0km
- 22.5694 South 142.9463 East
- Opalton Road Junction

Turn a sharp right for Winton or left if you wish to connect to one of the other drive routes, including 'Try Your Luck', 'Dinosaur Drive' and 'Pioneer Trail'.

- 37.1km / 14.3km
- 22.4650 South 142.9468 East
- Winton/Jundah Road Junction

Turn right for Winton or left to Lark Quarry Dinosaur Trackways and Old Cork Station.



Little Jump Up