

# Lightning Ridge Warrumbungles & Western Plains Zoo

16 May  
2011  
6 Days

\$1125ppts  
\$357s/s

From opal mining to rugged mountain ranges, this tour will give you a unique experience of Lightning Ridge and the Western Outback of New South Wales.

## Day 1: Home—Coonabarabran (LD)

Our coach will depart Strathfield, Hornsby, the Central Coast and Newcastle before making our way west on the Golden Highway. Lunch will be at **Merriwa** the shire famous for its rich wheat, beef and sheep farming. After lunch we will head through Coolah to the land of the "Black Stump" to Coonabarabran, the astronomy capital of Australia for the next two nights.

**Country Gardens Motel 02 6842 1711 (2 nights)**

## Day 2: Siding Springs and the Warrumbungles (BLD)

Our first visit will be to **Siding Springs Observatory** where we will gain an insight into the telescopes and the wider universe. This is a fascinating destination, and will answer all of your questions about the universe with the most advanced scientific knowledge. After lunch we will visit the **Warrumbungle National Park**, with some time to do a short walk, and visit the Visitor Centre. For dinner tonight, we will enjoy a meal at the award winning, lavishly decorated **Golden Sea Dragon Chinese Restaurant** opposite our motel.

## Day 3: Lightning Ridge, Black Queen, Artesian Baths (BLD)

This morning we will head to the grain growing areas of **Coonamble and Walgett** on our way to Lightning Ridge. In 1997 the Walgett Grain Terminal set a record for grain handled in a 24 hour period. We will arrive in Lightning Ridge in time for lunch at the cosmopolitan **Lightning Ridge Bowling Club** before visiting the **Black Queen**, three hand built sandstone cottages, made by Joan Andrews, who became a stone mason and artist at the age of 60. The building incorporates 14,000 bottles and walls in 34 beautifully designed feature walls and a world class **Antique Lamp Museum**.



We will have a **relaxing swim in the hot artesian baths before dinner**. These are reputedly good for arthritis and sore limbs, so make sure you bring your swimmers for a leisurely wallow in the waters. We will have dinner at our motel.

**Lightning Ridge Hotel Motel 02 6829 0304 (2 nights)**



## Day 4: Guided Tour of Lightning Ridge, Bevan's Cactus Farm, John Murray's Art Gallery (BD)

After breakfast, a local tour guide will show us the township and mining areas before we visit an **underground opal mine** and shops and do some fossicking before morning tea. **We visit the Cactus Farm** before lunch in town at own expense. In the afternoon we will have time to visit **John Murray's Art Gallery** before we explore the town, more opal shops and have another swim.



## Day 5: Lightning Ridge—Dubbo (BLD)

This morning (hopefully with pockets full of opals) we will head south for morning tea at Gulargambone. After lunch, we will spend the afternoon at the world famous **Western Plains Zoo**. You will have the option of walking, cycling or being chauffer driven around this complex. This Zoo is one of the few in the world where fences are kept to a minimum, instead using natural barriers such as moats and mounds.

**Country Comfort Ashwood Resort 02 6881 8700**



## Day 6: Dubbo—Home (BL)

Following the Mitchell Highway to Wellington with time to view the Wellington Sculpture, we will make our way back to the east coast. Travelling over the Blue Mountains we will arrive back in Sydney mid afternoon, and Newcastle later in the afternoon.