

suggested itineraries



Mildura Rural City Council

# wentworth history & heritage trail

Travel Distance - 68km. Time required approx. 6 - 7 hours

Wentworth is situated at the junction of the Murray and Darling Rivers, an area first discovered by Captain Charles Sturt in 1830, paving the way for what was to become a thriving river port. Following Sturt's discovery the junction became a crossing point for overland drovers and became known as Hawdon's Ford. A number of squatters established rein over the area and by the mid-1840's it became known as McLeod's Crossing named for the first white residents of the settlement.

With the arrival of the steamers in 1853 the port was established and became the largest inland port and the third largest port in Australia. The town site was approved in 1859 and was named after the New South Wales explorer and politician William Charles Wentworth, on June 21, 1859. Many of the early sites and buildings are featured in this history and heritage itinerary.

This itinerary, when downloaded to your smart device, is fully interactive, so you can choose to follow the itinerary as offered, or pick just those items that peak your interest, after all this is all about you!

Simply select the destination and hit "Take Me There" and your smart device will bring up the destination on Google Maps. Just select start and Google Maps will direct you there - simple!

Have a fantastic day, and if you need any assistance please give us a call on 1800 039 043.

## 1 Junction Island - Confluence of the Murray and Darling Rivers (28.9km from previous point)

Junction Island is the shoal of land between the Darling and Murray Rivers. Captain Sturt sailed down the Murray on his expedition and arrived at the confluence of the Darling and Murray Rivers on 23 January 1830. He was confronted by Aborigines, armed with spears and weapons, at the Junction Sandbar. The four Aborigines who had befriended Sturt's party on their journey and followed them on foot along the river, intervened and negotiated on Sturt's behalf and therefore the 'intruders' presence was accepted. Captain Sturt named the Murray River on that day, at the point where the two rivers converged. Since the construction of Lock 10, resulting in the increased height of the rivers, the clay bank described by Sturt has seldom been visible since the 1930s. A canoe tree is also located along the trail that leads to the point. Flora, fauna, wildlife and birdlife abound within this island reserve.

Ski Reserve Rd, Wentworth NSW

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## 2 PS Ruby (1.9km from previous point)

Built at Morgan, S.A., in 1907, she was the fourth paddle-steamer to be called 'Ruby'. She transported passengers and cargo between Echuca, Mildura, Wentworth and Goolwa. After a long and busy life, Ruby slowly fell into disrepair, ending her days as a houseboat at Mildura. Ruby was purchased by the Rotary Club

of Wentworth in 1968 and was dry docked in Fotherby Park, as a reminder of the riverboat era. In 1995, the Rotary Club handed ownership to the Wentworth community, in the trusteeship of the Wentworth Shire Council. In 1996 a Restoration Committee was formed from representatives of local organisations and the Wentworth Shire Council. Six years and 1000s of volunteer hours later, Ruby had a brand new hull and she was returned to water in a dock pond. Excitement grew as the steam engine became operational. She was all steamed up for her 100th Birthday in 2007. Restoration work takes place on PS Ruby on various days. The workers welcome visitors on board the steamer to see their progress-you will be amazed!

Fotherby Park, Wentworth NSW



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### 3 Wentworth Wharf (850m from previous point)

The wharf was originally built in 1879 using local timber. It was a major landmark of the town and a hive of industry. Throughout the riverboat era, Wentworth was the busiest inland port within NSW (third busiest port after Sydney and Newcastle). During one week a record 31 steamers were docked at the wharf. The original wharf deteriorated and was demolished in 1983. A similar replica of the wharf, including the little customs office, now stands in its place. Sitting on the wharf is a statue of John Egge, a riverboat captain who came to Wentworth in the 1870s. Originally from China, John Egge operated a bakery, butchery, floating shop and a boarding house during his time in Wentworth and was one of the largest traders on the river.

Wharf St, Wentworth NSW

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### 4 Customs House (160m from previous point)

The Customs Office was constructed in c1884, replacing the first Customs building (constructed in c1864 and situated on the west side of the Darling River, near the bridge). This building remained an integral part of the busy Port of Wentworth up until the decline of the river trade in the 1890s. A Customs Officer was still operating from this site in 1912. It is now a private residence and during 2001, a commemorative plaque was placed on the house by the Australian Customs Authority.

Private Residence - Not open for inspection. External roadside viewing only.

Cnr Darling & Adelaide Sts, Wentworth NSW



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### 5 St Francis Xavier Church (350m from previous point)

This is the first Roman Catholic Church built along the Darling River and the second church built in Wentworth. The foundation stone for Saint Francis Xavier Church was laid on June 18, 1871, in a ceremony held in pouring rain. The first mass was held in the unfinished Church in the early part of November 1872, by Rev. Matthew Ryan.

Adams St, Wentworth NSW

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### 6 Town Hall (300m from previous point)

The Wentworth Town Hall began life as the Mechanics Institute Hall, built in late 1884. Later it included a library and facilities

for films to be shown. The Town Hall has recently undergone restoration and refurbishment and is available for use by the Community.

24 Adelaide St, Wentworth NSW

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### 7 St Andrew's Uniting Church (600m from previous point)

The first Presbyterian property was in Cadell Street and extended back to Murray Street. The Manse, one of the earliest brick buildings, was built in 1859. After the Manse was destroyed by fire, the original chimney-stack was converted to a sundial and placed here in the grounds of St Andrews. The brick church of St Andrews was built in c1883. The adjacent building, the Alex and Betsy Armstrong Memorial Manse, was erected in 1929. In 1977 the Methodist and Presbyterian churches merged to form the Uniting Church. After the 1881 Methodist Church in Sandwyck Street was demolished, the Hall was then moved here to St Andrews.

Short St, Wentworth



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### 8 Rendelsham (The Nunnery) (170m from previous point)

The first house to be called Rendelsham was built by William Gunn, who was the first Mayor of Wentworth. He lived here until he built the second residence in the centre of the town, again called Rendelsham House. The first Rendelsham House then became Catholic Church property and was used by the local Priest as the Presbytery. In 1892, it became a convent, home of the Sisters of Mercy, who established and taught at the neighbouring St Ignatius School (privately owned).

Private Residence - Not open for inspection. External roadside viewing only.

28 Cadell St, Wentworth NSW

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### 9 Junction Park (700m from previous point)

The junction is the confluence of Australia's two longest rivers, the Murray and the Darling, which combined, is the fourth largest river system in the world.

The Darling is a clay-based river, its milky appearance contrasts starkly to that of the mighty Murray, creating a true spectacle when the Darling is flowing strongly. Truly one of Australia's

iconic must-see attractions.

You can climb up to the viewing tower and look down upon the confluence of the two majestic rivers, take a leisurely stroll along the walking track, take advantage of the facilities on offer for a barbecue or picnic or simply read up on the history of the Darling River in the pictorial information in the gazebo.

Cadell Street, Wentworth

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### 10 Lockmaster's Residence, Lock 10 and Weir (650m from previous point)

This brick residence was built (circa 1855) for Dr Emil Renner, Wentworth's first doctor, who arrived from Adelaide on horseback. He was escorted by Hugh Jamieson of Mildura Station and Ned Bagot of Moorna Station, who were concerned for the medical needs of the district. When Dr Renner left in 1870, Joseph Gurney, who operated as a wool fellmonger, acquired the home and it became known as Gurneys. When Lock 10 was to be built, the house was purchased and enlarged to become the home of Mr GF Hickson, Engineer-in-charge of the construction. The house was then named Edith Cottage after Mr Hickson's wife, Edith.

Lock 10 is one of 13 locks and 15 weirs situated along the Murray River. The locks and weirs maintain a high water level for navigation and pumping and is intrinsic today as an irrigation source. Situated 830kms from the Murray Mouth, the lock and weir were completed in 1929.

Private Residence - Not open for inspection. External roadside viewing only.

Lower Cadell St, Wentworth NSW



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### 11 Thegoa Lagoon (650m from previous point)

Thegoa Lagoon is an ephemeral (non-permanent) freshwater wetland that supports a healthy and diverse array of native flora and fauna. It is an important cultural, social and economic resource to Wentworth and the Lower Murray Darling region. The lagoon is approximately 30 metres above sea level with a surface area of around 80 hectares and a capacity of more than 600 megalitres.

The lagoon area contains numerous archaeological sites displaying evidence of past Aboriginal habitation. During and following floods the lagoon would have provided the Aborigines with an abundant supply of water, animal and plant materials. These sites have been assessed as having a moderate to high archaeological scientific significance due to their representation and preservation. All of the sites remain significant to Barkindji Elders and the Barkindji community. Sites include:

- Middens - these are where Aboriginal people discarded their

food scraps, which included the mussel shells remaining today.

- Hearths - there is evidence of campfires or hearths.
- Scar trees - canoes, shields, coolamons (bowls) and other tools were cut from the bark of mostly River Red Gum trees.
- Boundary/Marker trees - these trees are a remarkable living example of Aboriginal expertise. It is thought two branches were grafted together to create a circle, perhaps marking a boundary or providing a place for an offering.

The ecology of the lagoon is adapted to periodic cycles of flooding and drying. Such cycles are an essential part of the ecological productivity and diversity of these wetlands.

Thegoa Lagoon has a number of walks and drive trails ranging from 2.8km-9km in length.

Lagoon Road, Wentworth



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### 12 Rendelsham House (2.3km from previous point)

Rendelsham House was built in 1882, by and for William Gunn, the first Mayor of Wentworth (the second of his houses named Rendelsham). The dwelling is one of the largest and most impressive in Wentworth. It is also significant for the fact that it has housed some of the town's most important and memorable pioneers. The house has had many uses over the years, including a bed and breakfast, a restaurant and tearooms and is once again a private residence.

Private Residence - Not open for inspection. External roadside viewing only.

22-24 Sandwych Street, Wentworth

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### 13 Wentworth Military Collection (400m from previous point)

The Wentworth Military Collection is a must see for the avid military history buff, servicemen and women past and present or anyone who has a connection to the Australian armed forces. This unique collection displays relics, artefacts and militaria from all over the world, with an emphasis on Australian service to our nation. From the 1890 Boer War to Operation Slipper 2012, the collection also displays past and current service issue uniforms and equipment.

Open daily: 10am – 4pm

11 Sandwych Street, Wentworth

Telephone: **03 5027 2443**

Website: [www.wentworthmilitarycollection.com](http://www.wentworthmilitarycollection.com)

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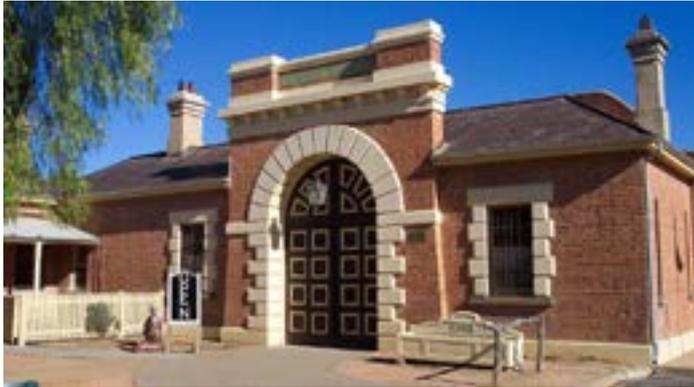
#### 14 Old Wentworth Gaol (750m from previous point)

The Old Wentworth Gaol is the oldest of the Australian designed gaols. It was built during 1879-1881 and operated until 1927, and is acknowledged as being in the best original condition of its type. Inside the gaol are the original stocks, whipping stool and rack, and examples of the shackles used to secure the prisoners.

It now welcomes visitors to experience gaol life from the inside and offers great photo opportunities with prisoner and guard uniforms available to wear.

Open daily: 10am - 5pm (Closed Christmas Day)

112 Beverley Street, Wentworth NSW  
Telephone: **03 5027 3337**



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#### 15 Wentworth Pioneer Museum (700m from previous point)

Discover Wentworth's heritage at this museum that has a collection of more than 30,000 artifacts and relics covering all aspects of the history of Wentworth. It houses one of Australia's biggest photographic collection on river boats and of Australia's megafauna.

There is a fantastic megafauna display which includes replicas to scale including a Diprotodon, a Procoptodon, a Genyornis and a Thylacteo. Other displays include a 90lb Murray Cod

caught in 1971, a 1942 W.L.A. Harley Davidson motorbike and a paddlesteamer display.

Open daily: 10am – 4pm

117 Beverley St, Wentworth NSW  
Telephone: **03 5027 3160**

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#### 16 Wentworth Court House (1km from previous point)

The Wentworth Court House was opened on 13 April 1880. It took the place of a smaller brick building further up Darling Street, but in the same town block. Made from local clay bricks it is a magnificent building that has stood the test of time and provides an excellent example of pioneer architecture and design. The Court House has been restored and the original picket fence replaced. It is still used for local court sessions. The National Trust has listed this building as one to be preserved because of its unique history.

74 Darling Street, Wentworth, NS



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#### Return to Mildura (28km)

Using the link below, return to Mildura.

[TAKE ME BACK TO MILDURA](#)