

Rylstone Region Scenic Drives

The Rylstone Region is one of those rare, uncrowded places that combines old-fashioned friendliness and genuine charm with good modern food, great places to stay, and breathtaking scenery of rural and wilderness landscapes. Whether you enjoy bushwalking, fishing, canoeing, photography or birdwatching, would like to explore some history, visit a winery or taste some olive oil, experience a small town hot rod or agricultural show, or just find a great cup of coffee.... the Rylstone Region is too good to miss.

The area sits astride the Great Dividing Range, and is a gateway to the World Heritage Wollemi National Park to the east; the scenic Capertee Valley to the south; the heritage gold towns of Sofala and Hill End to the southwest; the deeply carved upper valleys of the Goulburn/Hunter river system to the north, and of course the Wine Region of the Mudgee valley.

Our scenic drives take you to all of these highlights. Distances and road surfaces are indicated in the descriptions. Please be on the lookout for stock and wildlife, especially in unfenced areas and at dusk. Drive carefully on unsealed roads to minimize dust and erosion, and be aware that some surfaces may be slippery or corrugated.

For further information, visit www.rylstone.com

Cox's Creek - Narrango Road Loop Drive

This drive takes you east from Rylstone into sandstone escarpment country where you will follow the meandering Cox's Creek towards Nullo Mountain, returning via Olinda and the broad Cudgegong Valley.

Take the Bylong Valley Way north out of Rylstone or Kandos. Two kms north of Rylstone turn right into Cox's Creek Road (becomes unsealed after 8 kms). Enjoy the stunning rock formations on the left side of the road as you pass through rural and bushland areas. The road eventually emerges from the rocky country into the Cudgegong River valley (and back onto a sealed road) at the small community of Olinda. Turn right into Narrango Road and follow this back to Rylstone (15 kms) past Dabee Station, the original pastoral lease granted in 1820 that opened up the valley to colonial settlement. Approximately 50 kms, about 20 kms unsealed. Allow 2 hours.

Additional options:

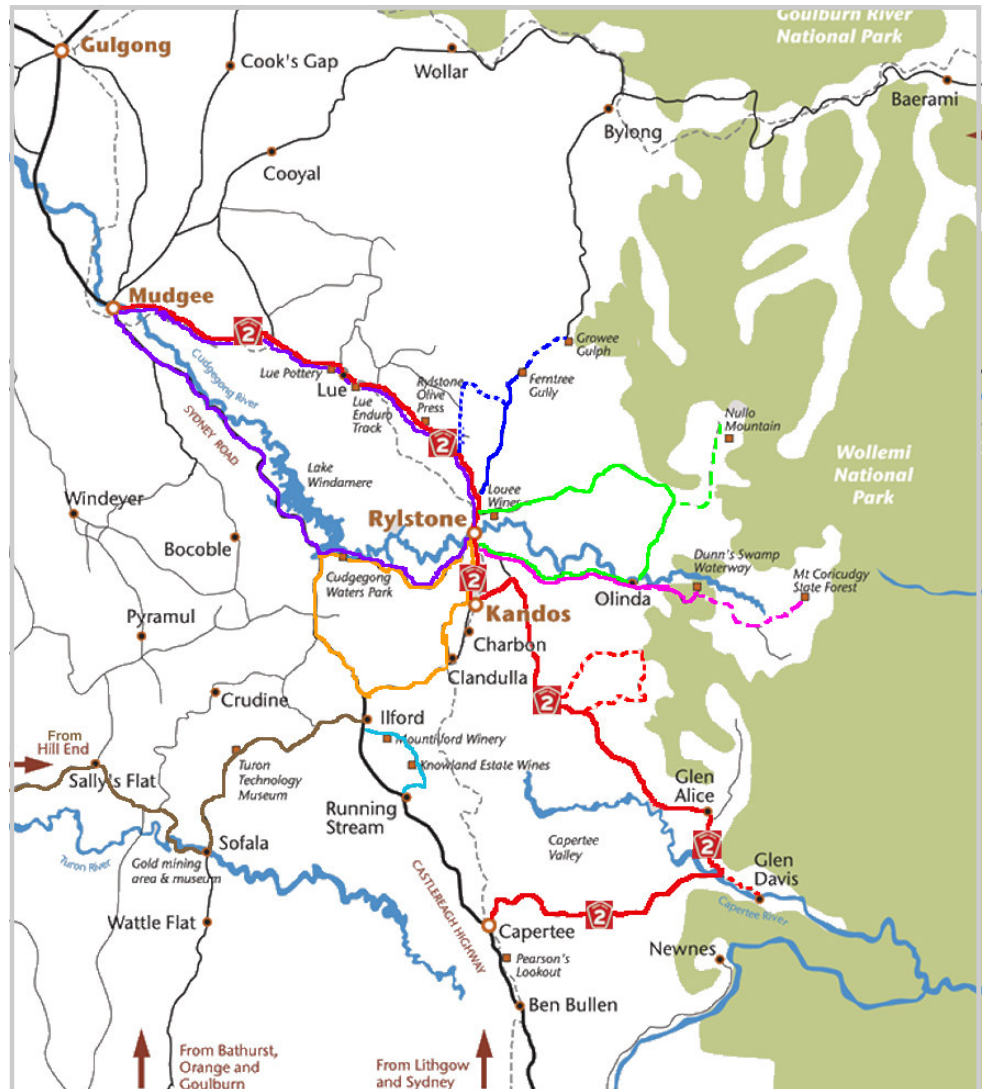
1) At the junction of Cox's Creek Road and Nullo Mountain Road (22 kms up Cox's Creek Road), turn left and climb up to the top of **Nullo Mountain**, where rich basalt soils and a cooler wetter climate have grown enormous trees and lush pastures. Travel along the top of the mountain as far as your curiosity takes you, then return by the same road, and rejoin the journey.

2) At the village of Olinda, turn left into Mt Coricudgy Road and follow this further east into Wollemi National Park and on to **Dunns Swamp** (7 kms from Olinda). See next drive.

Dunns Swamp Waterway

This beautiful waterway was created in 1926 by a dam built to provide water to the Kandos Cement Works. It is surrounded by many beautiful pagoda-shaped rock formations. Here you can take a number of short walks, picnic, camp, swim, fish (with a licence), canoe, or take a boat cruise.

From Rylstone, head east on Fitzgerald Street (look for the signs to Wollemi National Park, turn off Ilford Road next to the Hospital). After 2 kilometres head left at the Y junction into Narrango Road. From Kandos, take Dabee Road to the intersection with Glen Alice Road. Continue straight across on unsealed Brown's lane to Narrango Road, turn right.



Follow Narrango Road through the broad Cudgegong valley to the village of Olinda (15 kms). At Olinda continue straight ahead on Mt Coricudgy Road (the continuation of Narrango Rd, becomes unsealed after a kilometre). Pass over the cattle grid and historic Bird's Hut. At this point the road enters Wollemi National Park and through a narrow pass in the rocks (go slow and toot horn for safety). Continue on to the left hand turn off to Dunns Swamp (Ganguddy). Follow this track for 2 kms to the picnic ground and camping area. Basic facilities such as composting toilets, tables, and wood BBQs are provided. Take water, firewood, and food. Approximately 52 kms return, 20 kms unsealed.

Additional option:

At the Dunn's Swamp turnoff continue straight ahead (east) for a further 12 kms (unsealed) to the **Kelgoola Picnic Ground** in Coricudgy State Forest. There are great views of more pagoda rock formations and Mt Coricudgy along the way. The picnic area is on the headwaters of the Cudgegong River at the base of Mt Coricudgy. No facilities, take water, firewood, food. Please close any gates and leave as you found them. Return via the same road.

Ferntree Gully Reserve and Beyond

Ferntree Gully is a nature reserve with good walks that can be accessed off Bylong Valley Way, 17 kms north of Rylstone. Watch for the sign, turn right into a sandy track and follow this for about 2 kms to the picnic area and parking spot. The walking tracks take you down to a cool narrow ferntree-studded valley, and/or around the top edge of the valley where you can get an

overview of the pagoda rock formations on either side. Allow an hour and a half minimum to do the full loop walk returning to the picnic area, longer if you like to dawdle inspecting the rock formations, ferns and orchids along the way. Take food and water. Medium grade walk, ascents/descents on some uneven slopes and stairs. Return from the picnic area and turn left into the Bylong Road to return to Rylstone. Approximately 40 kms return, 4 kms unsealed to get into and out of the Reserve.

Additional options:

1) Either on the way in to, or out of, Ferntree Gully, pass the Ferntree Gully turnoff on Bylong Valley Way and travel another 3 kms to the top of **Growee Gulph**, where the headwaters of the Goulburn River have cut a stunning gorge through the sandstone rock layers almost 300 metres/1,000 ft deep. Continue on down the steep winding road into the Gulph, with great views of rock faces on the sides of the Valley. You can stop at the roadside picnic area on the left (5 kms down the Gulph) and then return, or go all the way down into the Bylong Valley before retracing your steps (sealed). Return the way you came.

2) Return to Rylstone via **Breakfast Creek Road**. From the Ferntree Gully turn off, return along Bylong Valley Way for 7 kms and then turn right into Breakfast Creek Road. This unsealed road (11 kms, unsealed) takes you through a pleasant valley in escarpment country into the top end of the Lue Valley. There are some gates, please close once you go through. The road intersects the Lue Road. Turn left and return to Rylstone, 9 kms.

Kandos - Lake Windamere - Rylstone

Loop Drive

This lovely scenic drive takes you from sandstone cliff country into the heavily folded ranges to the west and past Lake Windamere, with some great vistas.

From Kandos take the Sydney Road. As you pass under the overhead line that carries buckets of limestone to the cement works 2 kms from Kandos, look for a right hand turn (unsealed) that takes you to the Rotary Lookout just above the road. This offers an elevated view back into the valley, and of Kandos at the foot of Coomber Melon Mountain. Rejoin the road for 16 kms until it intersects the Castlereagh Highway north of Ilford. Turn right onto the Highway and climb up to and then over Aaron's Pass (named for the Aboriginal guide to William Lawson, of the trio who found a way over the Blue Mountains). You will descend a large hill. At the bottom turn right into Cudgong Road for 1 kms to Lake Windamere and Cudgong Waters Park on your left. Entry to the park is by a \$2 coin operated boom gate. Here you can camp, caravan, picnic, go boating (with your own equipment), or go fishing (licence required) for Silver Bream, Golden Perch (Yellowbelly) and Murray Cod, or just relax and enjoy the view. The original town of Cudgong is now drowned under the Lake. When you are ready to leave, turn left into Cudgong Road and follow this back to Rylstone. Take in the spectacular view of the Cudgong Valley and the varied peaks of the Great Dividing Range as you cross over Old Maids Hill. Approximately 60 kms in total, all sealed road.

Drive slowly as you pass along the edge of the lake and note the folded rock strata in the road cuttings. This includes folded layers of limestone approximately 400 million years old. Some of the local limestone has been transformed through the effect of great heat and pressure into marble. Cudgong Marble from the area was used for the interior of Commonwealth Bank in Sydney.

Kandos/Rylstone - Mudgee Loop Drive

If you are planning a visit to Mudgee during your stay, why not take one road on the way to Mudgee and another on the way back. Both roads offer great views and this drive can be done in either direction.

Leaving Rylstone travel north on Bylong Valley Way 4 kms and take the left hand turn off on the Lue Road towards Mudgee 48 kms. The road travels down a beautiful valley, passing through the small hamlet of Lue, and emerges into the Mudgee area on Lawson Creek. The drive enters Mudgee on the northeast side of town (Wollar/Cassilis Road) close to the heart of the local wine district. Once in Mudgee, return to Rylstone/Kandos via the Castlereagh Highway (Sydney Road) - follow the signs. This takes you past more vineyards into hilly country and past Lake Windamere. When you are 33 kms from Mudgee, turn left into Cudgong Road and return to Rylstone (21 kms) or to Kandos (28 kms). Take in the spectacular view of the Cudgong Valley and varied peaks of the Great Dividing Range as you cross over Old Maids Hill. Approximately 110 kms without sightseeing in Mudgee, all sealed road.

Additional option:

If returning from Mudgee via the Castlereagh Highway, at approximately 20 kms take a left hand turn and drive 3 kms to view the enormous **Dam Wall** on the Cudgong River that has created Lake Windamere. There is a viewing platform and a picnic ground with toilets

Sofala and Hill End Gold Towns –

Tourist Drive 4

This drive through the rolling hills and steep valleys to the west of Rylstone takes you to the now sleepy gold mining towns of Sofala on the Turon River and Hill End, returning via Mudgee. This drive includes 83 kms of unsealed road and there is no fuel until Hargraves, approximately 135 kms from Rylstone/Kandos.

Tourist Drive 4 commences at Ilford on the Castlereagh Highway. From Rylstone/Kandos take the Bylong Valley Way/Sydney Road to Ilford 27 kms, turn left onto the Castlereagh Highway to Ilford village 2.5 kms. Here you turn right to Sofala/Bathurst (all sealed). Enjoy the views from the ridge tops on the way to Sofala 30 kms. You will pass the award winning Turon Technology Museum displaying the development of steam and internal combustion engines, open every weekend or by appointment. At the Turon River, turn left into Sofala and take time to explore the small village, once a hive of gold mining activity in the 1860's and '70's.

When leaving Sofala, take the road to Hill End (unsealed) 36 kms. The road passes the picnic area of Wallaby Rocks, up the spectacular Devils Pinch, and on through the village of Sallys Flat to Hill End. This town was proclaimed a Historic Site in 1967 and is managed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. A walk around the town reveals the historic cottages, churches and commercial buildings and there are photographic plaques at the site of buildings no longer in existence. The landscape is still marked by the mining activity, and there are 2 mines open for inspection. A visit to the museum in the old Hospital gives insights into the hardships of the early miners and contains a replica of the largest single lump of gold ever to be found in Australia - the Holterman Nugget. Food and drink are available. To return to Rylstone/Kandos, take the road to Mudgee 83 kms via the districts of Tambaroora, Hargraves, and Grattai. Tourist Drive 4 ends at the Castlereagh Highway 3 kms northwest of Mudgee. Turn right and return to Rylstone/Kandos via the Lue Valley or the Castlereagh Highway (around 55 kms) – see Kandos/Rylstone - Mudgee Loop Drive. A journey to the gold towns is an all day excursion, approximately 230 kms total.



Capertee Valley Drives – Tourist Drive 2

The Capertee Valley is the second largest enclosed valley in the world featuring glorious exposed cliff escarpments, a volcanic plug and buttes rising from lush rolling grazing land. Tourist Drive 2 connects the village of Capertee on the Castlereagh Highway with the towns of Kandos and Rylstone (84 kms) and on to Mudgee (55 kms) via this beautiful valley. It is a scenic alternate entrance to the Rylstone Region well worth the deviation, or alternatively a scenic return route to Sydney.

From Sydney, turn off the Castlereagh Highway at Capertee village. There is a 34 kms section of unsealed road, generally in good condition during dry weather. The road descends into the Capertee Valley through rocky outcrops providing panoramas of the cliffs and valley floor. The road turns north towards Glen Alice at the intersection with the Glen Davis Road (see side trip options below), passing through rolling pastoral and woodlands surrounded by the rugged escarpments of the Capertee Valley. The Dunville Loop, leaving from Tourist Drive 2 and returning to it, is a 30 minute side trip that passes closer to the escarpment walls and is particularly beautiful in late afternoon light.

Tourist Drive 2 leaves the Capertee Valley at Mt. Marsden (point of the Great Divide) and then enters the broad valley of the Cudgong River. Taking a left hand turn at Dabee Road, it then enters the town of Kandos, famous producer of Kandos Cement. The town was developed in the early 20th century to

support the cement works and boasts many cement buildings and a good industrial museum open on weekends. The drive then proceeds on to historic 19th century Rylstone with its collection of fine stone buildings, shops, cafes, pubs and a charming showground on the banks of the Cudgong River.

Tourist Drive 2 then continues via the Lue Valley to Mudgee, 55 kms distant. See Mudgee Loop Drive above.

Total distance: 137 kms from Capertee to Mudgee. Estimated time: 2 hours at average driving speed (without side trips), longer if you linger and explore.

Additional option:

1) You can penetrate even further into the valley by going on into **Glen Davis**. This now sleepy village, named after the Davis brothers of the Davis Gelatine Company, but originally known as Green Gully, was developed as the site of a shale oil industry during WWII that lasted 12 years before closing. The site of the refinery is on private land and not accessible. The Capertee River, which drains the valley, has cut a gorge from here through to the Colo River that then joins the Hawkesbury River. The rock walls towering above the valley are spectacular, especially in late afternoon light. Food and drink are available at Glen Davis.

Scenic Stops and Return Journeys to Sydney

Pearsons Lookout

On the Castlereagh Highway (Sydney Road) approximately 5 kms south of the village of Capertee, it is well worth stopping for a few minutes at Pearson's Lookout for spectacular views into the Capertee Valley. The sandstone escarpments light up in the afternoon light and the atmosphere in the valley is always changing with the passage of sunlight, cloud, fog, and rain. The large butte sitting to the right is Pantoney's Crown, named after William Lee, the first settler in the valley. It is now a Nature Reserve in Gardens of Stone National Park and is part of the Blue Mountains World Heritage Wilderness.

Return to Sydney via Mt Vincent

You can make a short but beautiful deviation from, and returning to, the Castlereagh Highway by going over Mt. Vincent rather than Cherry Tree Hill. From Rylstone or Kandos proceed to Ilford and turn left into the Castlereagh Highway. Pass through the hamlet of Ilford and, shortly after the Public School on your right, turn left into Mt. Vincent Road (unsealed). This winds east and up onto the high plateau of Mt Vincent past vineyards and rural properties with some scenic views. The road rejoins the Castlereagh Highway at Running Stream on the other side of Cherry Tree Hill where you can continue your journey to Sydney. Additional 10 kms, additional 20 minutes travel time.

Return to Sydney via Capertee Valley

See Capertee Valley Drives. This deviation is well worth doing if you have the time to spare for its stunning views of sandstone escarpments from the valley floor. From Rylstone take Fitzgerald Street to the Glen Alice Road, from Kandos take Dabee Street to the Glen Alice Road and follow this southeast into Capertee Valley. This becomes the Capertee Road which you follow all the way, emerging from the valley at the village of Capertee to rejoin the Castlereagh Highway. Approximately 75 kms without side trips, allow an additional 30 minutes travel time.