

SPIRIT OF THE SOUTHWEST

NEW SOUTH WALES VICTORIA

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2026



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from \$9,990* pp





INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Spirit of the Southwest, an incredible two week journey offering an unparalleled in-depth exploration of New South Wales and Victoria by rail and road.

With a mixture of must see sights and exclusive experiences, you'll find virtually everything is included, allowing you to relax and truly immerse yourself in each destination.

Below - Visit tiny **Jugiong** for our farewell dinner at the spectacular Sir George Hotel

Unlike many tours, we head far away from main roads and the average inclusions. In several cases we will stop for two nights, allowing you to see more of each destination with free time to explore on your own.

New and far-flung regions and favourite destinations hide wonders awaiting your discovery. Begin each day knowing that new experiences await as the Cruise Express team take care of all the details.

Each destination provides an invitation to connect with the people and places we encounter. Plus, everything is exclusive, meaning no crowds or queues.

We invite you to join us.



Top - Enjoy dinner at the spectacular Pavilion at **Lowes Wines** just outside Mudgee

Above - Relax and taste some of the best produce and wines in Australia including **Fowles Wines** at Avenel

Middle left - Visit the historic **Junee Roundhouse Museum** with its large heritage collection

Left - Overnight in **Ballarat** and visit the Ballarat Tramway Museum including a historic tram ride

ITINERARY

----- August 2026

MONDAY 31ST

Board our beautifully restored 1960's heritage railmotor and settle in for a memorable journey west from Sydney. As we leave the suburbs behind and climb through the spectacular Blue Mountains, enjoy the unique experience of travelling in classic railmotor comfort, complete with opening windows that provide a genuine connection to the passing landscape.

Beyond Wallerawang, we join the rarely travelled Gwabegar Line, traversing some of New South Wales' most breathtaking scenery. Highlights include the magnificent Capertee Valley, renowned as the second-largest canyon in the world, where dramatic escarpments and vast open vistas create an unforgettable rail experience.

Upon arrival in Rylstone, we transfer by coach for the short journey to Mudgee. After checking into our accommodation, join your fellow travellers for a welcome drink and dinner at the hotel's acclaimed Gigi's restaurant.

Overnight: Clairfield Hotel (or similar) - **L,D**

----- September 2026

TUESDAY 1ST

This morning travel by coach to the historic town of Gulgong. Take in the spectacular views from Flirtation Hill then tour the oldest Opera House in Australia - the Prince of Wales. You'll have time to explore the local museums or perhaps discover a souvenir in one of the local stores. We return to Mudgee for an exclusive lunch at Mudgee Brewing Co. This afternoon visit the fascinating Mudgee Museum with its enormous collection and take a short guided tour of the town. After some free time, this evening we transfer to Lowe Winery for dinner in the Pavilion overlooking the surrounding countryside. Enjoy a multi course dinner with matched Lowe wines.

Overnight: Clairfield Hotel (or similar) - **B,L,D**

WEDNESDAY 2ND

After breakfast we transfer by coach back to Rylstone to rejoin our railmotor and retrace our journey to Wallerawang. Here we change directions and head west to the tiny town of Tarana. Enjoy lunch at the historic 1873 built Tarana Hotel before continuing to Bathurst. Dinner tonight is at the historic Victoria Hotel.

Overnight: Rydges Mount Panorama Bathurst (or similar) - **B,L,D**

THURSDAY 3RD

This morning we enjoy a scenic drive around Bathurst's famous Mount Panorama circuit before making our way to the magnificent Abercrombie House, a grand Victorian Mansion built in the 1870's and one of Australia's most impressive private residences. Upon arrival, we will be welcomed by owner Christopher Morgan for a tour of this remarkable historic home, followed by a welcome drink and a delightful lunch in elegant surroundings.

After lunch, we rejoin our heritage railmotor for a scenic cross-country rail journey through the Central West, travelling to Parkes. On arrival we transfer to our accommodation before enjoying dinner at the local services Club.

Overnight: Parkes local motels - **B,L,D**

FRIDAY 4TH

Return to Parkes Station to reboard our railmotor. Today our journey takes us far away from main roads. Watch as the scenery changes from the flat farmlands surrounding Parkes to the vast outback of far Western NSW. Enjoy lunch onboard supplied by award winning chef Luke Piccolo and make a short stop at Ivanhoe to stretch our legs before travelling past the famous Menindee Lakes. After arriving at Broken Hill we transfer to our motels. Dinner tonight is at a local pub.

Overnight: Broken Hill local motels (or similar) - **B,L,D**

SATURDAY 5TH

Today we'll visit some of the iconic sights of Broken Hill such as the Line of Lode Memorial and the Big Picture Gallery. Enjoy lunch at the Sulphide Street Railway & Historical Museum and tour the exhibits including the 'Silver City Comet' then head for the Living Desert and Sculptures. Take in the breathtaking views while enjoying sundowners at Mundi Mundi Plains Lookout followed by an evening packed with fun, entertainment and food at the Topsy Camel.

Overnight: Broken Hill local motels (or similar) - **B,L,D**

SUNDAY 6TH

This morning we travel by coach to Menindee where we take in the views from Lake Menindee lookout and enjoy morning tea at Copi Hollow. Visit Kinchega National Park with its teeming birdlife and haunting river red gums rising from the water, then gather for lunch at the Maidens Hotel. We then head south across

the vast plains of far Western NSW, making a short stop at the Pooncarie Telegraph Hotel for an afternoon drink. We then visit Wentworth where the Murray and Darling Rivers meet. After checking in to our Mildura hotel we join our fellow travellers at Trentham Estate Winery for dinner with matched wines.

Overnight: Quality Hotel Mildura Grand (or similar) - **B,L,D**

MONDAY 7TH

Today we travel by coach to the spectacular World Heritage listed Mungo National Park. This 110,967 hectare (274,205 acre) park is part of the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Willandra Lakes Region and is the traditional meeting place of the Muthi Muthi, Nyiampaar and Barkinji Nations. Enjoy a guided tour of the park including the famous 'Walls of China' where erosion has sculpted sand and clay into fragile yet imposing formations. Our tour includes lunch at Mungo Lodge before returning to Mildura. Dinner tonight is aboard a historic Murray River paddlewheeler for an evening river cruise.

Overnight: Quality Hotel Mildura Grand (or similar) - **B,L,D**

TUESDAY 8TH

After breakfast we head further south across the farming plains of the Mallee. At Sea Lake we join the 'Royal Train' which includes carriages that actually once carried royalty. Take in the views from the open air balconies or open the windows from the heritage compartment cars better connecting you with the passing countryside. We pause to view the silo art at Nullawil before experiencing the unique sight as our train transits Wycheproof where the railway line travels through town in the middle of the Calder Highway! The train makes a short stop at the spectacular Maryborough Station before arriving at Ballarat where we check in to our hotel and enjoy dinner at the quirky brewpub - Aunty Jacks.

Overnight: Mercure Ballarat (or similar) - **B,L,D**

WEDNESDAY 9TH

This morning we visit the Ballarat Tram Museum, housing a historic collection of vehicles from Ballarat, Melbourne and Geelong. Included in your visit is a short ride on one of their heritage trams along the shores of Lake Wendouree. Late morning we reboard our heritage train and enjoy lunch in the Dining Car as we journey to Melbourne via North Geelong. On arrival at Southern Cross Station we make the short walk across the road to our hotel for check in. Rest of day at leisure.

Overnight: Mövenpick Hotel on Spencer (or similar) - **B,L**

THURSDAY 10TH

Today is entirely at leisure to explore Melbourne as you please. Our centrally located hotel makes it easy to explore with tram stops right outside and Southern Cross Station across the road. This evening we re-group to enjoy dinner at the nearby Saint & Rogue gastropub on Little Collins Street.

Overnight: Mövenpick Hotel on Spencer (or similar) - **B,D**

FRIDAY 11TH

This morning we board the 'Spirit of Progress' for a non-stop run to Seymour. The train features some of the original 1937 compartment cars and the unique Observation-Parlor Car where you might join friends while you take in the spectacular views. Disembark and transfer by coach to Avenel to visit Fowles Wine for a tour, tastings and farm-to-table lunch. Return to Seymour for our afternoon express run to Albury where we transfer to our hotel and enjoy afternoon drinks in the foyer. Rest of evening at leisure.

Overnight: Atura Albury (or similar) - **B,L**

SATURDAY 12TH

This morning we head north by coach to Walla Park. Meet the Paechs - the 5th generation of their family to be farming at Walla Park. Take in the view of the surrounding land from Morgan's Lookout, learn about local indigenous culture, farming life and enjoy lunch featuring produce from local suppliers. After lunch we visit the fascinating Junee Roundhouse Museum before continuing on to the tiny town of Jugiong for our farewell drinks and dinner at the spectacular Sir George Hotel. After dinner we transfer to our hotel for the evening.

Overnight: Abode Murrumbateman (or similar) - **B,L,D**

SUNDAY 13TH

This morning, we farewell the Southern Highlands as we travel by private coach towards Sydney. Along the way, we visit the renowned NSW Rail museum, home to one of Australia's finest collections of heritage locomotives, carriages and railway memorabilia. Enjoy a guided visit through the museum before a light lunch. The highlight of our visit is a nostalgic steam-hauled journey aboard the museum railway, travelling from Thirlmere to Buston and return through the picturesque countryside.

Following our rail experience, we rejoin our coaches for the final leg of our journey back to Sydney. A late afternoon arrival at Sydney Terminal marks the conclusion of a wonderful rail adventure filled with memorable scenery, fascinating history and great company. - **B,L**

Right - Travel through country Victoria in spectacular style aboard the **Royal Train** featuring carriages that once served many dignitaries and actual royalty



Above - Visit the Living Desert & Sculptures during our visit to Broken Hill

INCLUSIONS

14 days

- Exclusive rail service from Sydney to Rylstone, Tarana, Bathurst, Parkes and Broken Hill aboard a heritage rail motor including refreshments
- 2 nights Mudgee accommodation at Clairfield Hotel (or similar) with dinner on the first night and breakfast daily
- Visit Prince of Wales Opera House at Gulgong including tour and entertainment
- Lunch at Mudgee Brewing Co.
- Visit Mudgee Museum and Historical Society
- Guided sightseeing tour of Mudgee
- Dinner at the Pavilion at Lowe winery with matched wines
- Lunch at the historic Tarana Hotel
- Dinner at the Victoria Hotel in Bathurst
- 1 night Bathurst accommodation at Rydges Mount Panorama (or similar) with breakfast
- Visit historic Abercrombie House for a tour and lunch
- Drive the Mount Panorama racing circuit
- 1 night Parkes accommodation at local motels with breakfast
- Dinner in Parkes at the local Services Club
- Lunch by award winning Griffith based chef Luke Piccolo and Limone Restaurant
- Dinner at the Broken Hill Hotel
- 2 nights Broken Hill accommodation at local motels with breakfast daily
- Full day Broken Hill sightseeing tour including Line of Load Memorial, Big Picture Gallery and Sulphide Street Railway & Historical Museum with lunch
- Sundowners at The Living Desert & Sculptures
- Dinner and entertainment at the Topsy Camel
- Visit Lake Menindee Lookout
- Morning tea at Copi Hollow
- Visit Kinchega National Park
- Lunch at Maidens Hotel Menindee
- Afternoon drinks at Pooncarie Telegraph Hotel
- Visit Wentworth to view where the Murray and Darling Rivers meet
- Exclusive dinner at Trentham Estate Winery
- 2 nights Mildura accommodation at the Quality Hotel Mildura Grand (or similar) with breakfast daily
- Exclusive day tour to Mungo National Park with lunch at Mungo Lodge and guided tour of the Walls of China
- Exclusive dinner aboard a Murray River paddle steamer
- Exclusive daylight diesel hauled heritage rail service from Sea Lake to Ballarat and Melbourne aboard the 'Royal Train' including unlimited water, standard tea and coffee
- Transit Wycheproof where the railway runs through the centre of town in the middle of the Calder Highway
- 1 night Ballarat accommodation at the Mercure Ballarat (or similar) with breakfast
- Exclusive dinner at Aunty Jacks brewpub
- Visit Ballarat Tram Museum with historic tram ride
- Lunch aboard the train on the way to Melbourne
- 2 nights Melbourne accommodation at Mövenpick Hotel on Spencer (or similar) with breakfast daily
- Full day at leisure in Melbourne
- Exclusive dinner at Saint & Rogue gastropub
- Exclusive daylight heritage rail service from Melbourne to Seymour and Albury aboard our private heritage train featuring carriages from the iconic 'Spirit of Progress' including unlimited water, standard tea and coffee
- Exclusive lunch at Fowles Wine at Avenel with matched wines
- Afternoon drinks at the Atura Albury
- 1 night Albury accommodation at the Atura Hotel with breakfast
- Exclusive farm visit to Walla Park including Wiradjuri cultural talk, farm visit with shearing demonstration, visit to Morgan's Lookout and lunch featuring local produce and beverages
- Visit Junee Roundhouse Museum
- Farewell drinks and dinner at Sir George Hotel Jugiong
- 1 night Murrumbateman accommodation at the Abode Hotel (or similar) with breakfast
- Guided visit to the NSW Rail Museum in Thirlmere including a light lunch and steam-hauled rail journey from Thirlmere to Buxton and return
- Group coach transfers throughout
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Cruise Express Tour Manager and Escorts

Right - Enjoy comfortable accommodation throughout your tour including two nights at the new **Clairfield Hotel** in Mudgee





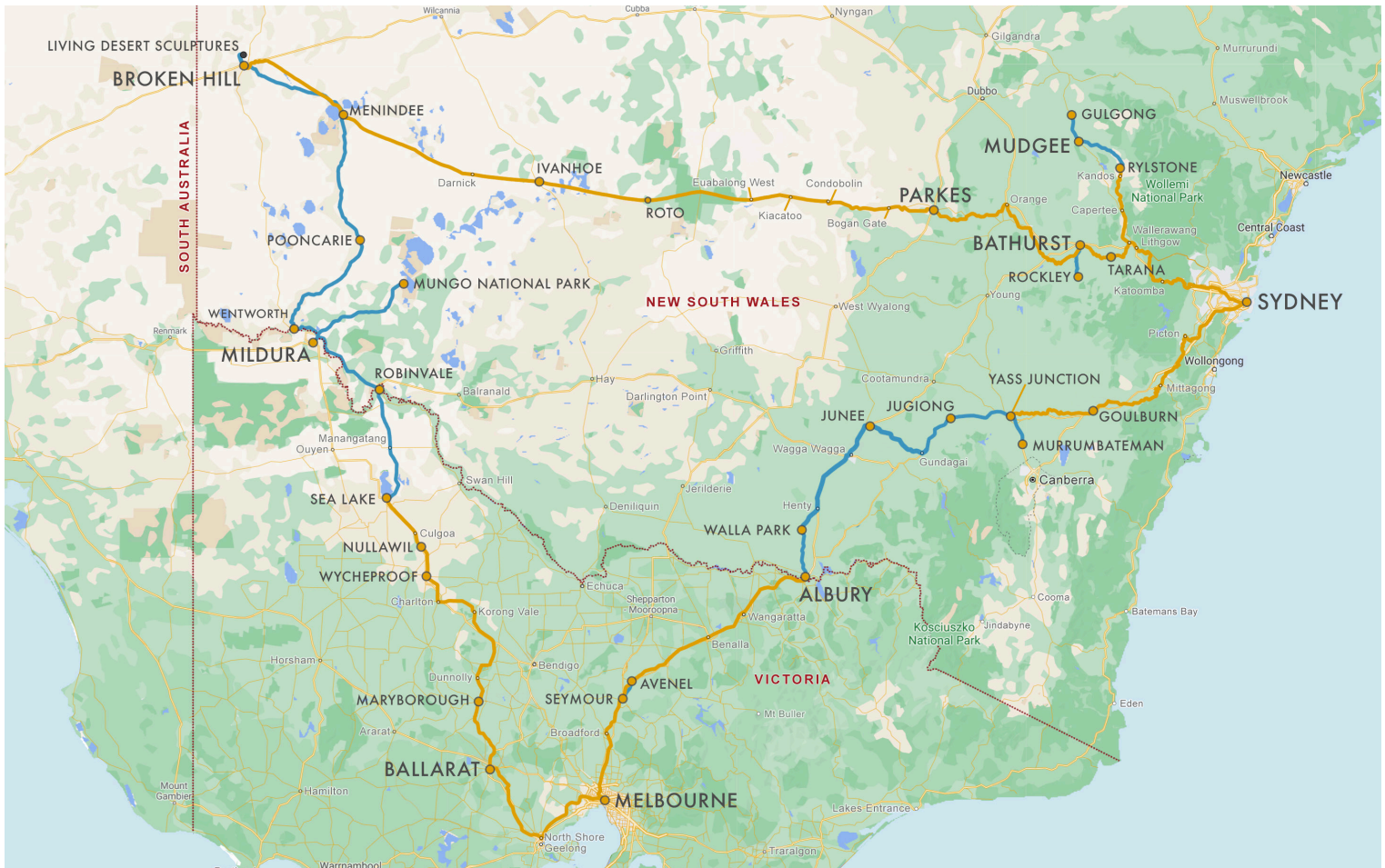
Above - Travel aboard a 1960's built heritage railmotor from Sydney to Rylstone, Tarana, Bathurst, Parkes and Broken Hill



Left - Visit the remote town of Wentworth where the Murray and Darling Rivers meet



Right - Our centrally located hotel allows easy exploration of Melbourne with a full day to explore as you wish



SPIRIT OF THE SOUTHWEST

FARES
TWIN FROM \$9,990* pp
SOLO FROM \$11,990* pp



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*Fares and inclusions are per person either twin-share or single in AUD. Fares are subject to availability and may change at any time. Train departure and arrival times are subject to change. Heritage rail equipment is subject to change. This tour is subject to minimum group numbers being achieved. Ask your Travel Specialist for details. Cruise Express reserves the right to make changes to any details outlined in this brochure, without notice. Conditions apply, full Terms & Conditions are available on our website and on request. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are travelling and pay respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging. Railmotor image featured on this brochure is indicative of the kind of heritage rail motor we will be utilising on our tour.