

Quilpie Shire

a
**Matilda
Byway**

QUILPIE Shire in Queensland's Outback has it all – the magnificent natural diversity of the channel country, the ancient lands of the dinosaur, and the opportunity to find your own special opal as well as many more attractions.

The Quilpie Shire is home to a variety of animals and birdlife and the rugged landscapes make it not only a great place for four-wheel driving but also provides endless opportunities for keen photographers.

Just because the Quilpie Shire has a total population of 1100 doesn't mean there's not much to see and do. While visiting Quilpie, don't miss

seeing the extraordinary boulder opal altar, lectern and font at St Finbarr's Catholic Church. Also visit Baldy Top and Lake Houdraman.

Quilpie is home to a number of artists whose work is displayed throughout buildings and in the Quilpie Shire Gallery.

Just picture yourself sitting back relaxing watching the striking sunsets, enjoying the peaceful surroundings while overhead the bulgias are flying to their night sanctuary along the Bulloo River. The surroundings come to life with the cooler evenings, enticing an assortment of wildlife towards the famous riverbanks. You could even throw the fishing line in to catch a meal of yellowbelly. Did you know that all but three of the streets in Quilpie are named after birds? The Quilpie Museum and Visitor Centre has a full colour pictorial guide to the birds of the region to enhance your birdwatching experience in the Quilpie Shire.

If you're tired of travelling on the main highways, get off the main road and head west to the Quilpie Shire. Heading north for your winter holiday from the southern part of Australia, take the highway to Bourke then take a journey of discovery along the Dowling Track while travelling in the footsteps of Vincent James Dowling and other early pioneers who more than 100 years ago discovered the area, known as the Plains of Promise – people travelled the track for a new life and new opportunities. The Dowling Track travels from Bourke through Hungerford, Thargomindah and Toompine and concludes in Quilpie. Your options are endless, base yourself in Quilpie and take



day trips to surrounding townships of Eromanga, Adavale, Choepie or Toompine.

The township of Quilpie itself is the world's largest producer of boulder opal. Try your luck at the fossicking area – you may be lucky enough to take a piece of beautiful opal home with you. Fossicking for opals at designated fossicking fields requires a current fossickers permit. These can be obtained from the Quilpie Information Centre. The Duck Creek and Sheep Station Creek designated fossicking area is located 40km from Toompine.

To the south of Quilpie there is a famous little pub better known as the 'pub with no town'. In amongst the mulga is the pub with the coldest beer around. Toompine, the pub with no town but with lots of character, is 74km south of Quilpie along a bitumen road. Take the opportunity



St Finbarr's opal altar.

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to double the population and become a resident (for at least a couple of nights) of this unique Cobb and Co stop. There are budget rooms or places to camp.

From Quilpie, go west to Eromanga, known as the furthest town from the ocean in Australia. Visit Opolopolis Park and see the monument to the opal miners. Fittingly, the mining memorial is inlaid with opal. While you're there, drop into the Royal Hotel on the next block. Counter meals are available for lunch or dinner, and there is air-conditioned accommodation available as well. The mud-and-brick structure was one of the original buildings of the Cobb and Co route and opened its doors in 1885. So even if you're not planning to stay the night, call in for a drink so you can toast the longevity of this little outback pub.

Also see the rustic outdoor machinery museum in the main street and visit the Object Theatre. Eromanga has a rich history and recently bones from Australia's largest dinosaur

were found there. Learn the story of "Cooper," a gigantic titanosaurs.

Eromanga and surrounding districts is home to many of Queensland's oil and gas fields. Eromanga boasts its very own oil refinery.

Travel north 96km from Quilpie to Adavale through some impressive scenery. Visit the monument to commemorate the Polish immigrants who worked on the river crossings, see the historic graves and have a drink at the town's only hotel.

So come and discover attractions ranging from historical landmarks to true-blue Aussie experiences.

And what do you do at the end of a day of sightseeing? Relax with a good book, that's what. Buy a unique souvenir of your visit to Quilpie with a book or two by Jame Mclean, a Quilpie man whose days consist of running the family sheep and cattle property and whose evenings are spent writing outback fiction. A rural contractor before the almost decade-long drought, the author of four rural-based novels, short stories and poetry

now represents the fourth generation of his family on the land. With inspiration gleaned from a lifetime spent out in the elements and a yearning to share his part of Australia with the rest of the world, Jame is never short of ideas.

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2009 EVENTS CALENDAR

April 10-12: Eromanga Campdraft, Gymkhana and Rodeo

April 12: Tooropixie Clay Target Shoot

April 18: Police Charity Golf Day

April 19: Holden Scramble Golf Day

April 25: Anzac Day Street March, Service

April 25-26: Diggers Triples Carnival Bowls

May 2-3: Adavale Campdraft, Gymkhana and Rodeo

June 13-14: Champions of Champions Bowls

July 12: Presidents Day Bowls Quilpie

August 15-16: Hans Smallgoods Golf Day

and Open Golf Day Quilpie

August 21: Q150 Steam Train Arrives

August 22: Quilpie Diggers Race Club

Meeting: \$2000 Triples Bowls Day Sunday after Race

September 1: Quilpie Street Party

September 12: Quilpie and District Show



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