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Why Host a Meeting in Melbourne?

Alive and buzzing, Melbourne presents visitors with only one problem: an overwhelming reluctance to go back home. Hailed as the World's Most Livable City by *The Economist*, Melbourne captivates both visitors who come to work and those who come to play. With 7.5 million domestic visitors and 1.9 million international visitors per year, Melbourne is clearly a popular and gracious host. The city has hosted numerous international events including the 1956 Summer Olympic Games, the 2006 Commonwealth Games and the 2006 G20 Summit.



Melbourne's main conference facility, the [Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre](#), is located in the heart of the city on the banks of the River Yarra, close to the city's 23,000 hotel rooms and well connected to public transportation. With a new AU\$1 billion international convention centre currently under construction and due for completion in 2009, the existing facilities, including two state-of-the-art theaters and over 320,000 square feet of floor space, will be fully integrated with the new centre to create the best conference facilities in the country. Additionally, the centre will utilize a range of

features to achieve a 6 Green Star environmental rating from the Green Building Council of Australia. Planners can expect not only the best, but also the most sensible Australian venue when planning a meeting or event in Melbourne.

The Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre finds its home within walking distance of over 17,000 hotel rooms, though this number is set to grow as more and more hotels develop across the city. Three new hotels are currently in the works, including the 396-room Hilton Hotel to be part of the new centre. Downtown, Citadines Melbourne is scheduled to open in 2010, as is the newest hotel in the Crown Entertainment Complex. This AU\$300 million hotel will have 658 rooms. In terms of current hotels, the Rialto Hotel is set to convert into a five-star Intercontinental hotel, while the Grand Hyatt and the Hilton on the Park are undergoing AU\$40 million renovations.



Looking for a really special venue? Melbourne is home to over 40 museums, performing arts facilities and other unique venues available for private functions including the beautiful and historic UNESCO World Heritage Royal Exhibition Building. Known as "Jeff's Shed" after Jeff Kennett, the Victorian Premier at the time, the Royal Exhibition Building astounds guests with its grand Victorian architecture and depth of history.



As Australia's garden state, Melbourne has many outdoor venues as well. Guests will be delighted as they wander the lawns and ornamental fountains of Fitzroy Gardens or the Royal Botanical Gardens. For a venue central to both the physical and spiritual heart of the city, the Melbourne Cricket Ground is pivotal to Melbourne's claim of "World's Ultimate Sports City." With spectacular views of the skyline and elegant event rooms for up to 500 guests, what better way to capture guests' imaginations than a function on such revered and hallowed ground?

Melbourne is constantly updating and revitalizing what it has to offer. Recent major infrastructure projects include the redevelopment of Southern Cross Station, which services Sydney and Adelaide through connections at the city's main train station at Flinders Street, and the AU\$434 million upgrade of the Melbourne Cricket Ground for the 2006 Commonwealth

Games. The ground now features 10 new function spaces, striking views of the city, state-of-the-art audio-visual services and on-site catering by Epicure. Another sports venue, Melbourne Rectangular Stadium, is under construction and set to open in 2009. The AU\$268 stadium, intended to host soccer, rugby league and rugby union matches, can seat over 31,000 people.



Another major development is taking place at the Docklands precinct. Encompassing nearly 500 acres, including the Waterfront City, are undergoing an AU\$12 billion growth and improvement. Home to state-of-the-art marinas, gourmet restaurants, glitzy bars and a trail of eccentric urban art galleries, the Docklands are Melbourne's largest urban redevelopment project.

Melbourne is an important business, finance and manufacturing center and is also home to Australia's busiest seaport, which handles more than \$75 billion in trade every year. Much of Australia's automotive industry is located in Melbourne including Ford, Toyota and Holden, and the headquarters of some of the biggest banks and largest corporations are located in the city including NAB, ANZ, BHP, Rio Tinto and Telstra. Melbourne also has eight universities including the largest in the country, Monash University, which attracts thousands of international students every year.

Key Melbourne Metro Area Facts

Time Zone: Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST)

Convention Center: [Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre](#)

Airports: [Melbourne Airport \(MEL\)](#)

| Population | 3,806,092 | Destination Type Listings |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Hotels | 212 | • Beach destination |
| Hotel Rooms | 50,000 | • Golf destination |
| Unique Venues | 40 | • Smoke free restaurants |
| Restaurants | 750 | |

Additional Melbourne Information / History

Located in southeast Australia and nestled against the shores of Port Phillip Bay, Melbourne is the state capital of Victoria. Often referred to as Australia's sporting, music, cultural and fashion capital, Melbourne is an exciting cosmopolitan city that effortlessly combines a welcoming, laid back atmosphere with a thriving arts, sports and business focus.



Originally founded in 1835 as a pastoral settlement, Melbourne only narrowly avoided the moniker "Batmania," suggested by John Batman, one of the founding settlers. The Victorian gold rush in the 1850s caused the city's population to soar, so much so that by 1865, "Marvelous Melbourne" was Australia's largest and most important city, soon followed by the title of richest city in the world by the 1880s.

Open immigration policies after World War II resulted in a flood of immigrants that today create a dynamic and multicultural city home to people from all over the world including Italians, Macedonians, Indians, Sri Lankans, Greeks, Vietnamese, Spaniards and Africans, to name just a few. With a current population of 3.8 million, Melbourne is growing at such a rate that, by current estimates, it will overtake Sydney as Australia's most populous city by 2028.

Bisected by the Yarra River, Melbourne is a charming and exquisite city built on a grid with an extensive [tram network](#) radiating from the centre like the spokes of a wheel. Much of Melbourne's construction



occurred during the Victorian Age from 1837 to 1901. Although the impressive new skyline is dominated by daring modern skyscrapers such as the [Eureka Tower](#), the city's roots are still apparent in many of the city's buildings, grand boulevards and gardens. Stroll through Fitzroy Gardens, a wonderful example of Victorian era landscape gardening. Stop by the Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne Town Hall and Parliament House, which are some of the few still-standing buildings from this age.

At first glance, visitors would think the city of Melbourne runs on coffee, and on second glance, they'd realize they are right. Melburnians claim to make the best coffee in Australia, and not only are they fastidious about their caffeine fix, they are also discerning crowd when it comes to food. Eating is serious business in Melbourne, and visitors won't forget the gastronomic experience that awaits them in the city. From Chinatown on Little Bourke Street, with its incredible selection of mouthwatering Cantonese cuisine such as that of the [Flower Drum](#), to Lygon Street in the Italian influenced suburb of Carlton, Melbourne's culinary offerings do not disappoint.

After dark, this spirited city really heats up. Join the locals for a cocktail at a hot nightclub such as the famous science lab-themed [Croft Institute](#), or sink into a sofa to be entertained at the [Butterfly Cabaret Club](#). From art and music to sport and leisure, Melbourne is a passionate city, driven by an unstoppable vitality that lives up to and exceeds expectations. It's a guarantee: visitors will love this city.

Melbourne Climate Information

With a moderate oceanic climate, Melbourne is known for its unpredictable weather conditions. Due to its flat topography, its location on Port Philip Bay and the city's proximity to the Dandenong Ranges, weather systems often circle the bay. Summers in Melbourne are relatively hot and dry. December, January and February are the hottest months with an average temperature range of 79°F to 86°F. Summer heatwaves are relatively common, though humidity is generally low. Spring and autumn are pleasant with long periods of mild weather, clear skies and a daytime temperature range of 46°F to 66°F. July is the coldest month with an average temperature of 50°F.

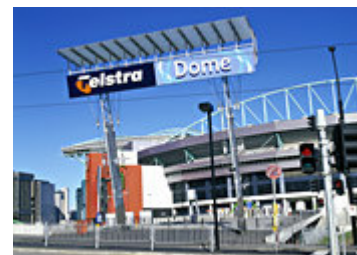
Though frosts and fog are common in the winter months of June, July and August, snowfall is rare. Rainfall is evenly spread throughout the year, although October is usually the wettest month and mid-January to mid-March tends to be the driest period. The average annual rainfall is 25.6 inches, seen over an average of 147 days a year. The best time to visit is during autumn or spring when daytime highs are usually mild in the 70s.

Melbourne Places of Interest

Docklands

Docklands is Melbourne's largest urban redevelopment project and is fast becoming the new "place to be." At a total cost of AU\$12 billion, the development comprises a vibrant mix of residential, commercial, retail and leisure elements and covers about 494 acres and nearly two miles of the River Yarra. The dynamic development is already home to a stunning array of impressive buildings, state-of-the-art marinas, gourmet restaurants, glitzy bars and a trail of eccentric urban art installments and sculptures. When the project is complete in 2015, it is expected to attract 20 million visitors a year and almost double the size of Melbourne's central business district.

Visitors can browse any number of boutique and specialty shops along waterfront promenades before indulging in a feast or drink at one of 65 cozy waterfront restaurants, cafes or bars. To top off the experience, patrons can devour wonderful views of the city from a ride on the Southern Star Observation Wheel, due for completion in 2008.



In addition to function spaces at restaurants and hotels in the Docklands area, private events can be held at one of four venues at Central Pier or at various rooms at Telstra Dome Arena. Upon opening, the Southern Star will also feature private capsules for up to 20 guests as well as the Star Room and Star Piazza for private rentals. Docklands parking is available at over 3,000 spaces in public lots.

Eureka Skydeck and the Edge

Rising from the city's skyline like futuristic shard of glass, the Eureka Tower opened to the public in

2007. Located in the thriving hub of Southbank, the tower is the tallest residential building in the world and holds the highest viewing platform in the Southern Hemisphere. Visitors to the Level 88 Skydeck experience an awe-inspiring view of the city that is made even more powerful by a visit to the Edge, a glass cube that slides its guests nearly 10 feet from the side of the building. Separating guests from a 984-foot-high drop by just a few inches of glass, the Edge guarantees to get hearts pumping.

The Eureka Tower has a private dining room and bar on Level 89 that is available for functions. The Skydeck is open daily from 10 AM to 10 PM, with last entry at 9:30 PM. Admission is AU\$16.50. Riding in the Edge is an additional cost of AU\$12. *For more information: +61 3 9693 8889*

Federation Square

Art and culture form the beating heart of Melbourne, so it's not surprising to find many of city's top attractions in one place. Federation Square, often referred to as Fed Square, is a thriving tourist plaza and popular meeting place that dazzles visitors with striking architecture and an impressive array of cultural complexes. Close to the major transport hub of Flinders Street Station, this AU\$440 million redevelopment project and cultural hotspot opened in October 2002.



Today it houses the Ian Potter Gallery: National Gallery of Victoria, the Australian Centre for the Moving Image and the National Design Centre, as well as numerous other exhibition spaces, museums, auditoriums, restaurants, bars and shops. Aside from various cultural events regularly held in the square, it also features a permanent outdoor screen that broadcasts major sporting and cultural events to the public for free. During the 2006 FIFA World Cup, it coaxed thousands of football fans out of bed in the middle of winter to watch the matches on the screen.

In addition to the numerous restaurants that offer event space, Federation Square is also home to BMW Edge, a 500-seat amphitheatre, and the uniquely-designed Atrium, which can hold up to 1,000 guests within its glass, steel and zinc walls. Federation Square has a parking lot open daily until late.

Queen Victoria Market

As the only surviving 19th century market in the city and the largest open air market in the Southern Hemisphere, the Queen Victoria Market is the true queen of Melbourne's markets, offering visitors a cosmopolitan shopping haven. Attracting millions of visitors a year, guests find themselves plunging headfirst into countless multicolored stalls selling anything from fresh fruits, vegetables, meats and seafood, to homemade chocolates, cheeses, jams, jewelry and clothes. Friendly stallholders chat and gossip with locals as they tout their wares, while street performers sing their hearts out to gathered crowds. When weary legs take over from the shopping frenzy, visitors can choose from an astonishing array of freshly squeezed juices, coffees and gourmet cooking from around the world. On Wednesday nights during summer, the night market comes alive with more stalls, dining, bars and two stages of live entertainment.

Queen Victoria Market is open Tuesday and Thursday from 6 AM to 2 PM, Friday from 6 AM to 5 PM, Saturday from 6 AM to 3 PM and Sunday from 9 AM to 4 PM. It is closed Good Friday, Anzac Day, Melbourne Cup Day, Christmas, Boxing Day and New Year's Day. *For more information: +61 3 9320 5830*

Shrine of Remembrance

Melbourne pays homage to those who have fought and died for Australia at one of its largest and most impressive landmarks: the Shrine of Remembrance. Originally built in memory to those who died in World War I, the shrine now represents all soldiers lost to armed conflicts and peacekeeping duties, and it is used throughout the year for over 120 ceremonies. Located in parkland between St Kilda Road and the Royal Botanic Gardens, the shrine's design was partly based on the Temple of Halicarnassus, one of the seven ancient wonders of the world. The shrine has two galleries showcasing a variety of exhibitions that aim to promote knowledge and understanding of the role of the Australian armed forces today.

The Shrine of Remembrance is open daily from 10 AM to 5 PM. It is closed Christmas and Good Friday. Admission is free. *For more information: +61 3 9661 8107*

Melbourne Entertainment

Crown Casino and Entertainment Complex

Located on the banks of the River Yarra, the Crown Entertainment Complex is the largest gambling center in the Southern Hemisphere, well able to cater for those who like a bet. Games include traditional standbys of blackjack, craps, pai gow, poker, baccarat and roulette. The Crown is also the founder of the electronic version of roulette known as Rapid Roulette. The Poker Room has various varieties of the game, and the casino houses 2,500 poker machines as well as several slots.



Guests can take a break from the tables at one of over 40 restaurants and bars, including Nobu, Giuseppe, Silks, Number 8 restaurant and wine bar and more. For non-gamers, the complex has luxury boutiques featuring high-end retailers such as Prada, Burberry and Louis Vuitton, as well as restaurants, bars, a movie theater and a bowling alley. With a 900-seat cabaret theater, the complex is host to numerous shows and concerts; past headliners have included singers Elton John, Celine Dion, Whitney Houston and Dionne Warwick. Some of Melbourne's most prestigious events including Australian television awards the Logies and the Brownlow Medal Australian Football League awards are held at the complex.

Covering over 43,000 square feet, the Crown Entertainment Complex has several spaces for private events. Among them, the Promenade Room accommodates 600 guests theater-style and the River Room overlooking the Yarra waters can seat 270 guests. The casino is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Hours and schedules for other attractions vary. *For more information: +61 3 9292 6968*

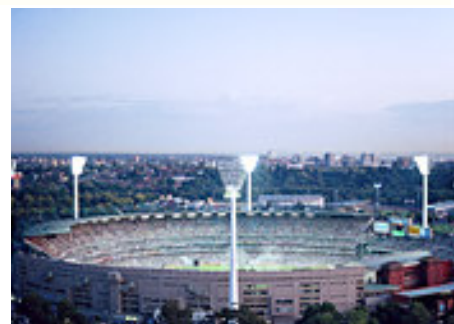
Marriner Theatres

Marriner Theatres operates four locations throughout Melbourne's downtown: Regent Theatre, Princess Theatre, Comedy Theatre and Forum Theatre. The Marriner family stepped in to restore these theaters from the disrepair they suffered over the years, beginning with the re-opening of the Princess in 1989. Today, the theatres continue to upgrade by making strides to "green" their facilities, taking steps such as sourcing organic and local produce and using co-mingled garbage collection. Hosting a wealth of entertainment, any one venue offers visitors the chance to see a concert by the latest musical acts or watch both new and classic Broadway plays, from *Wicked* to *Guys and Dolls*.

Marriner Theatres has several private event spaces across its venues, including the Romanesque Forum Theatre for up to 1,500 guests or the historic Princess for up to 200 people. On-site catering and technical services are also available. Hours and prices vary based on performance. *For more information: +61 3 9299 9860*

Melbourne Cricket Ground

Lovingly referred to as the "Spiritual Home of Australian Sport," the Melbourne Cricket Ground is the largest stadium in Australia and holy ground to this city of sporting aficionados. Colloquially known as "the MCG" or simply the "G", the venue was the centerpiece of both the 1956 Summer Olympic Games and the 2006 Commonwealth Games. Today, it is used for cricket, rugby and football matches as well as rock concerts for performers such as Madonna. Also on site is the National Sports Museum, which has an amazing range of sporting-related artifacts and interactive technology. Australian Football League matches (also known as AFL or Ozzie Rules) are played at the MCG at least once a week, and for a truly unforgettable Melbourne experience, guests should catch a game.



The Melbourne Cricket Ground has a number of function rooms with capacities for 30 to 500 people, including 10 recently opened spaces. The AFL season runs April to September. AFL match ticket prices range from AU\$20.30 to AU\$43.35. On-site parking is available. *For more information: +61 3 9657 8888*

National Gallery of Victoria

The National Gallery of Victoria has the largest art collection in Australia, so large that in the mid-1990s it was split between two sites to accommodate it all. The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia in Federation Square has more than 20,000 pieces of Australian art including colonial, modern and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander collections.

The National Gallery of Victoria International is located across the River Yarra from the Ian Potter Centre and is home to a stunning European section, including masterpieces by Rembrandt, Picasso, Turner and Monet. Patrons can also marvel at the stained glass ceiling of the great hall that took over five years to create.

Both venues have a range of function rooms with capacities from 80 to 900 guests. The Ian Potter Centre: NGV Australia is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 AM to 5 PM and Thursday until 9 PM. The NGV International is open Wednesday through Monday from 10 AM to 5 PM. Both galleries are closed Good Friday and Christmas. General admission is free, but entrance fees may apply to specific exhibitions. *For more information: +61 3 8620 2222*

Sidney Myer Music Bowl

As the Victorian Arts Centre's outdoor arena, the Sidney Myer Music Bowl in the Kings Domain Gardens has hosted everything from the pumping rock of Metallica to the electronic masters Daft Punk to the operatic genius of Dame Kiri Te Kanawa. With seating for 2,150 guests and space for another 12,000 on the graduated lawn, the bowl is a magical place for music lovers. Home to the annual free summertime series with performances by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the bowl also continuously hosts a great line up of Australian and international artists.

The Sidney Myer Music Bowl's ample space is available for private events. The Merlyn Myer Room, adjacent to the stage, also offers space for meetings. The box office in the Theatres Building is open Monday through Saturday from 9 AM to 9 PM. Another box office at Hamer Hall is open one hour prior to performances. Ticket prices vary based on event, ranging from free to AU\$100. *For more information: +61 3 9281 8450*

Victorian Arts Centre

The Victorian Arts Centre, with its enormous skyward spire, is the flagship of performing arts in Melbourne and has become a national icon. Comprising two buildings, the Melbourne Concert Hall and the Theatres Building, the centre hosts Opera Australia's Melbourne season, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Melbourne Theatre Company, the Australian Ballet Company and well-known contemporary dance company Chunky Move, as well as a variety of touring productions. Patrons can catch a performance or simply take a tour of the centre to admire its architecture and glorious interior.



The Victorian Arts Centre has numerous rooms for private events of 16 to 200 people. The box office in the Theatres Building is open Monday through Saturday from 9 AM to 9 PM. Another box office at Hamer Hall is open one hour prior to performances. Ticket prices vary based on performance but usually range from AU\$50 to AU\$100. Tours cost AU\$11. *For more information: +61 3 9281 8000*

Melbourne Restaurants

Abla's

After encouragement from family and friends who witnessed her prowess in the kitchen, Abla Amad opened her restaurant in 1979. Although she insists it is "still a simple and humble place," Abla's is widely regarded by food critics as one of the best Lebanese restaurants in the city. Characterized by its special warmth and unique family feel (it is still run by Abla and her daughters), the restaurant is packed most nights, convincing customers to return time and time again for her wonderful cooking. Patrons can expand their knowledge of Lebanese food with her famous kibbee, or raw, spiced ground lamb, homemade lemonade with rosewater, and loubiyeh, or green beans in spicy tomato sauce.

Abla's serves lunch Thursday and Friday from noon to 3 PM and dinner Monday through Saturday from 6 to 11 PM. All entrees cost AU\$25. *For more information: +61 3 9347 0006*

Colonial Tramcar Restaurant

For a unique meal in Melbourne, guests can hop on the Melbourne Colonial Tramcar Restaurant. Offering a "dining experience like no other," this classic 1927 tram restaurant offers traditional silver and white linen service as it cruises through Melbourne's bygone days. Serving up a variety of uniquely Australian food, dishes include grilled kangaroo loin brushed with lemon myrtle, thyme and honey, served over vegetables. Diners can sip fine Australian wines as Melbourne's most famous sites glide past the window.



The Colonial Tramcar Restaurant operates three tramcars that sit 36 people each. Tramcars are available for private functions for up to 108 guests. The Colonial Tramcar Restaurant runs for lunch daily from 1 to 3 PM, for early dinner daily from 5:45 to 7:15 PM, and for dinner Sunday through Thursday from 8:35 to 11:30 PM and Friday and Saturday from 8:35 to 11:30 PM. The four-course lunch is AU\$75; the three-course early dinner is AU\$70; the Sunday through Thursday five-course dinner is AU\$115; and the Friday and Saturday five-course dinner is AU\$130. *For more information: +61 3 9696 4000*

Flower Drum

The Flower Drum is Melbourne's most famous Chinese restaurant and has won an impressive string of accolades. Food critics often refer to it as Australia's best Cantonese food and as a result, it's essential to book well in advance, usually about six weeks. On arrival, attentive waiters cater to the patron's every need as they are whisked to their table through the traditional Cantonese décor of red lanterns, wood statues and silk portraits in the spacious dining room. The food is produced using only the finest ingredients and includes sang choi bao, or textured quail, the wonderfully tender salt and pepper squid, and the Flower Drum's pièce de résistance: the Peking duck.

The Flower Drum is open Monday through Saturday from noon to 3 PM and Monday through Sunday from 6 to 10:30 PM. Entrees range from AU\$37 to AU\$51. *For more information: +61 3 9662 3655*

Madame SouSou

With a delightful European feel, this petite French restaurant coaxes patrons in with a flirtatious smile and showers them in gentle kisses from the soft light of boho-chic chandeliers. Artistically framed nudes add to the luxurious décor and create an intimate space for diners to enjoy a truly sumptuous experience. Madame SouSou offers delicious breakfast, lunch and dinner items; the organic pork belly with crackling, apple glaze and semolina dumplings comes highly recommended. Madame SouSou also sells its own designer chocolates, teas and coffees and a yatalanga olive oil from South Australia.

Madame SouSou is open Tuesday through Sunday from 9 AM to 10 PM. Entrees range from AU\$25 to AU\$32. *For more information: +61 3 9417 0400*

Society Restaurant

Dating back to 1932, Society Restaurant was originally opened by Italian immigrant Giuseppe Codognotto as a gathering place for fellow Italians. After undergoing various transformations over the years, Society was restored to its famous roots in 2007, priding itself on "good food, simply served." Diners can enjoy Italian home-style favorites such as slow-cooked veal shanks on soft Reggiano polenta, twice-cooked duck in puff pastry layers, and housemade gnocchi with beef ragu and fresh-shaved black truffle. An extensive wine and cocktail list accompanies the entrees, ranging from champagne cocktails to margaritas to martinis. Guests can sip concoctions such as the High Society Long Island Green Tea, a mix of Belvedere gin, rum and green tea liqueur served with green tea, lime juice and sugar.

The restaurant has a wealth of rooms for private events, including the red-hued dining area Rino's Room, which has space for up to 50 people. Cocktail receptions for up to 120 guests can also be held in its High Society and Secret Society levels. Society Restaurant is open Monday through Friday from 7 AM to close and Saturday from 9 AM to close. Entrees range from AU\$15 to AU\$52. *For more information: +61 3 9639 2544*

Stokehouse

With million dollar beach and ocean views, the Stokehouse restaurant in St Kilda is a quintessential Australian dining experience, serving up "crisp-as-the-sea-breeze" Mediterranean and modern Australian food. Split into two levels, the Stokehouse comprises a casual downstairs bistro and a more formal upstairs restaurant. The bistro offers patrons a relaxing, beach hut feel and a variety of simple pastas, pizzas and entrees such as crumbed veal scallopini and grilled kingfish. The glamorous upstairs restaurant is the epitome of classy chic, with a spacious outdoor area and gourmet dishes such as grilled snapper fillet and spiced lentils with sautéed fennel and king prawns, tomato, basil and olive labna, as well as an extensive wine list.

The Stokehouse has recently updated its private dining room, which offers an elegant and unique atmosphere for functions and can cater for up to 30 seated guests. The Stokehouse serves lunch daily from noon to 2:30 PM and dinner daily from 6 to 10 PM. Lunch entrees range from AU\$21 to AU\$28 and dinner entrees range from AU\$23 to AU\$45. *For more information: +61 3 9525 5555*

Melbourne Nightlife

Butterfly Club

Billed as a "dollhouse-sized, Windsor Castle of camp, kitsch and good times," the Butterfly Club cocktail lounge and cabaret salon is the strikingly unique venue for an eclectic mix of music and performing arts. The two-story Victorian house is jam-packed with glittering fairy lights and fascinating knickknacks among its two well-stocked bars, three comfortable lounges, garden and covered outdoor courtyard.

The club offers space for private events, either as a club buy-out for 40 or more people, or as an upper level rental for up to 45 guests with the exclusive use of two lounge areas, a private bathroom and the Monarch Room Bar. The Butterfly Club is open Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday from 5 to 11 PM and Friday and Saturday from 5 PM to 1 AM. Ticket prices for performances range from AU\$10 to AU\$45. *For more information: +61 3 9690 2000*

Cherry

Cherry, Melbourne's first authentic classic rock bar, is appropriately located on AC/DC Lane. Since its opening in 1999, it has become an extremely popular live music venue offering a mix of classic rock, retro and alternative music among its two bars and main dance floor. A "beer drinker's delight," Cherry offers an astonishing range of brews including New Zealand's Monteith's and England's Newcastle Brown Ale.

The bar is available for private functions and offers an event room for up to 40 people. Cherry is closed on Monday, Tuesday and usually Sunday. Cherry is open Wednesday from 8 PM to close, Thursday and Friday from 5:30 PM to close, and Saturday from 9 PM to close. Wednesday admission is free and Thursday through Saturday cover is AU\$7. *For more information: +61 3 9639 8122*

Comics Lounge

Melburnians love a laugh, which is probably why the Comics Lounge has been such a popular nightspot venue for 10 years. With a wide range of new and established comics performing seven nights a week, it's the perfect place for patrons to go for some comedy. The lounge has an impressive 500-seat capacity and also houses a separate bar area with comfortable seating and a pool table. Guests can grab a bite from the lounge's modest menu, which includes Thai beef salad, American-style barbecue pork ribs, and snacks such as salt and pepper calamari, nachos and French fries. The venue is so popular that booking tickets in advance, especially on weekends, is recommended.

The Comics Lounge is available for private functions for up to 450 guests and offers on-site catering. It is open from Monday through Sunday from 7 PM to close. Schedules and prices vary based on performance. Food is served Monday and Wednesday through Saturday. *For more information: +61 3 9348 9488*

The Croft Institute

The motto of the funky Croft Institute, hidden in the alleys of Chinatown, is, If you can find it, you'll love it! Spanning three levels, the bar's décor is unlike any other. The ground level is laboratory-themed, complete with test tube shots and industrial sinks. The next floor is a hospital-like waiting area, where guests can stop at the "Departments of Male and Female Hygiene" before heading up to the gymnasium bar on the top floor. Here, guests can hit the dance floor or enjoy cocktails, wine or beer in an atmosphere reminiscent of physical education classes in the 1940s, right down to the bench seating and climbing wall.

The Croft Institute is available for private functions, with space for 22 to 60 guests. It is open Monday through Thursday from 5 PM to 1 AM, Friday from 5 PM to 3 AM and Saturday from 6 PM to 3 AM. Entry is free. *For more information: +61 3 9671 4399*

The Esplanade Hotel

The Esplanade Hotel, or the "Espy," is located in the beachside suburb of St Kilda and has been entertaining Melbournians for over 100 years. A true Melbourne icon, the sprawling three-story hotel was designed in a conservative Italianate style reminiscent of the seaside resort architecture of 19th century Britain. Home to competitive pool tables, a restaurant and two band rooms, the Espy is renowned for its laid back atmosphere and varied clientele. The Espy has great views of sunset over the water and live bands and comedians performing most nights; both the front bar and the historical Gershwin Room have nurtured burgeoning Australian talent.

Various function rooms are available at the hotel for rent. The Espy is open Monday through Wednesday from noon to 1 AM, Thursday through Saturday from noon to 3 AM and Sunday from noon to 1 AM. Entrance is free. Certain bands may require a cover charge of up to AU\$15. *For more information: +61 3 9534 0211*

Night Cat

As a contemporary and swing jazz club playing anything from hip hop to Latin, reggae to funk, or salsa to swing, the Night Cat creates a wonderful all-inclusive atmosphere attracting an eclectic blend of clientele. This sophisticated venue, with its comfy couches, painted checkerboard floor, retro furniture and great lighting, has live music most nights drawing guests out onto one of the largest dance floors in the area. Los Cabrones, a 14-piece Afro Cuban band, have been playing many Sunday nights to a packed house for 10 years, and Relax With Max, an 11-piece Afro beat funk band, plays many Saturday nights. Night Cat is open Thursday through Sunday from 9 PM to 3 AM. Admission is free most nights. *For more information: + 61 3 94162669*

Family Activities in Melbourne

Luna Park Melbourne

Despite its grand old age of 96, Luna Park still manages to wow the crowds with its iconic "Mr. Moon" gateway and Scenic Railway, the oldest continually-operating roller coaster in the world. The historic amusement park, located in the stunning beachside suburb of St Kilda, has 17 rides and attractions including the Enterprise, Pharaoh's Curse and G-Force high-speed thrill ride, as well as old favorites such as the Ghost Train and Carousel. Plenty of classic carnival food, including hot dogs, burgers and ice cream, and shops and games fill the park as well.

The park's Luna Palace is available for private events of up to 450 guests, as is the entire park for exclusive access. Luna Park is open daily from 11 AM to 6 PM with extra opening hours weekend nights during the summer and public holidays. Entrance to the park is free, but single ride tickets cost AU\$3 for children ages 1-3, AU\$5.50 for children ages 4-12 and AU\$7 for guests ages 13 and older. Unlimited ride tickets cost AU\$12.95 for children ages 1-3, AU\$25.95 for children ages 4-12 and AU\$35.95 for guests ages 13 and older. *For more information: + 61 3 9525 5033*

Melbourne Aquarium

Melbourne's state-of-the-art aquarium is certainly the most impressive aquarium in Australia. The aquarium captivates its guests at the 360-degree Oceanarium, home to giant sharks and stingrays that are fed daily in an incredible live show. Other exhibitions and encounters include the Great Barrier Reef, sea jellies, the floor-to-ceiling coral atoll and the touch-and-feel rock pools.

Due for completion in 2008, a massive expansion program at the aquarium will recreate Antarctic conditions with real ice, snow and King and Gentoo penguins. The new exhibit also comes with an expansion that will double the size of the aquarium and add improved retail, food and function spaces.

The aquarium is also available for private events, offering spaces such as the Fish Bowl, Coral Atoll and Upper Deck, and catering for 10 to 3,000 people. Scheduled to begin in late 2008, the new functions venue Antarctica will allow 10 to 1,200 guests to dine with the penguins. Melbourne Aquarium is open daily from 9:30 AM to 6 PM. Admission is AU\$16 for children and AU\$26.50 for adults. *For more information: +61 3 9620 0999*

Melbourne Museum

Home to eight main exhibition galleries, the Melbourne Museum is the largest museum in the Southern Hemisphere. Devoted to the culture and history of Victoria, the museum invites visitors to marvel at the a complete skeleton of a blue whale, or stop by the Bunjilaka Aboriginal Culture Centre for a look at art and artifacts from indigenous peoples.



The *Evolution* Gallery comes complete with dinosaurs and prehistoric animals. The *Australia* Gallery houses Australian memorabilia including Australia's "Wonder Horse" Phar Lap, a fully-restored carriage from the Luna Park Big Dipper and historic bark canoe from the River Yarra; and the *Mind and Body* Gallery features a world-first labyrinth exhibition about the mind. Guests can also explore the temperate Victorian forest environment at the *Forest* Gallery, or learn about the history and watercraft of Pacific Islanders at the *Te Pasifika* Gallery. The museum is also home to CSIRAC, the 5th electronic computer to be built in the world.

The museum has venues available for private events. Melbourne Museum is open daily from 10 AM to 5 PM. It is closed Good Friday and Christmas. Admission is AU\$6 for adults and free for children. Additional charges may apply for temporary exhibitions. *For more information: +61 3 8341 7777*

Phillip Island

About 90 minutes southeast of Melbourne sits the peaceful oasis of Phillip Island, which houses several attractions, resorts, accommodations and dining all within fewer than 10 minutes of one another. Guests can indulge in their need for speed at Phillip Island Grand Prix Circuit, which hosts several motor racing events yearly such as the MotoGP. Visitors can race on a scale replica Grand Prix Go-Kart Track or take a behind-the-scenes tour.

For a less fast-paced activity, the Phillip Island Nature Park is a collection of attractions including the immensely popular Penguin Parade, a nightly event when the world's smallest penguins cross Summerland Beach in droves on their way back to their sand burrows. Also in the park, the Koala Conservation Centre encourages guests to stroll on its treetop boardwalks, which afford up-close views of koalas in their native habitat.

Phillip's Island has a wealth of private event spaces, including the Wild Ocean Room and Summerland Room at the nature park, which, combined, have space for up to 120 people cocktail-style. The Grand Prix Circuit has seven flexible rooms that can be separated or linked to suit any event size.

The Penguin Parade takes place nightly, with hours ranging from 5:15 to 8:45 PM depending on time of year. The Koala Conservation Centre is open daily from 10 AM to 5 PM. Tickets for general Penguin Parade viewing are AU\$9 for children ages 4-15 and AU\$17.90 for adults. Tickets for the conservation centre are AU\$4.80 for children ages 4-15 and AU\$9.50 for adults.

Scienceworks

Scienceworks is at the forefront of interactive and hands-on learning with its stunning assortment of displays, activities, demonstrations, experiments and tours. Guests can get active in an extreme snowboarding experience or three-dimensional soccer game at *Sportworks*, and learn about the science behind popular household items, from food to appliances to animals, at *House Secrets*. Also in the center, the Melbourne Planetarium uses up-to-date technology to mesmerize guests with special effects and images of outer space.

Scienceworks has a number of rooms for private functions, including the 250-seat planetarium. It is open daily from 10 AM to 4:30 PM. General admission is AU\$6 for adults. Admission for children is free. Special exhibitions may require additional charges. *For more information: +61 3 9392 4800*

Recreation and Outdoors in Melbourne

Albert Park Public Golf Course

Located less than two miles from Melbourne's central business district, Albert Park Public Golf Course boasts "the best located golf course in the world." Situated in the beautiful Albert Park, the course curves alongside Albert Park Lake and the Formula 1 Grand Prix race track. Amongst exotic trees and fine elms, golfers can spend a relaxing day at the par 72, 18-hole course. A driving range and café are also at the park.

The course has a meeting room available for private events and offers on-site catering. Alberta Park Public Golf Course is open daily. Green fees are AU\$25 for 18 holes on a weekday and AU\$26.50 for 18 holes on weekends. *For more information: +61 3 9510 5588*

Fitzroy Gardens

Fitzroy Gardens are a wonderful example of Victorian era landscape gardening, covering 64 acres in the heart of Melbourne. Attracting over two million local and international visitors every year, these gardens certainly reinforce Melbourne's reputation as the Garden City. Guests delight in a visit to the Conservatory, which displays a range of flowers, from hydrangeas to poinsettias, depending on the time of year. Kids also love the Model Tudor Village of miniature thatched cottages, stocks, a school and a village church built to represent a typical Kentish village from the Tudor period of English history. Guests can also stroll along the People's Path in the northwestern corner of the gardens, lined with 10,000 individually engraved bricks.



The Conservatory and various areas of the gardens are available for private functions. Admission to the park is free. *For more information: +61 3 9658 9658*

Royal Botanical Gardens

Widely regarded as the best botanical gardens in Australia and among the best in the world, a visit to Melbourne's Royal Botanical Gardens comes highly recommended. Located southeast of Melbourne's central business district, the gardens spread out beside the River Yarra, affording spectacular waterside vistas. Visitors can see a range of plants from all over the world in the New Zealand and Californian collections: camellias, oaks, cycads, eucalypts, ferns, herbs, roses and more. For a taste of the tropical at any time of year, guests can escape to the Tropical Hothouse where dense vegetation hides a plethora of weird and wonderful plants.



The Old Observatory Building, the terrace beside the Ornamental Lake and Gardens House are available for private functions. The Royal Botanical Gardens are open daily at 7:30 AM until 8:30 PM, November to March; until 6 PM, April, September and October; and until 5:30 PM, May to August. Admission is free. *For more information: +61 3 9252 2300*

St Kilda Beach

St Kilda Beach, with its glittering sands and calm safe water, is a popular summer destination for Melburnians. A great place to escape the heat of the city, visitors stop by the beach to relax, swim and sunbathe or partake in a wide variety of recreational activities including windsurfing, jet skiing, rollerblading and beach volleyball. Guests can also amble down St Kilda Esplanade and stop for an ice cream treat before checking out the colorful and varied fairground rides and amusements of Luna Park or perhaps taking a sunset wander along historic St Kilda Pier. Patrons visiting on a Sunday will especially enjoy the Esplanade Market's over 200 stalls of handmade arts and crafts. The market is open Sunday from 10 AM to 5 PM.



Melbourne Tours

Aboriginal Heritage Walk

The Aboriginal Heritage Walk guarantees an enlightening experience that connects guests to the spirit of the land. The traditional camping and meeting places of the indigenous Boonerwung and Woiwarrung people are located within the beautiful grounds of the Royal Botanic Gardens, which guests can explore to catch a glimpse of pre-European Australia. Indigenous Aborigines serve as guides that help visitors gain a deeper understanding of the fascinating aspects of Aboriginal culture, including a wealth of local plant lore. Tours run Thursday and Friday during the fall. Tours cost AU\$18. *For more information: +61 3 9252 2429*

Hidden Secrets Tour

Many visitors are apt to feel lost when visiting a foreign location, but with the Hidden Secrets Tour, guests can familiarize themselves with Melbourne's wonderful quirks – and its deepest secrets – on half-day walking tours. Animated guides delve into Melbourne's hidden gems on the signature Lanes and Arcades Tour, which visits over 50 of Melbourne's best designer boutiques and art galleries. Other tours include the Art and Design Tour, which includes new installations, sculptures, stencils, commissioned mural art, project works and architecture, and the Sommeliers City Walk, on which visitors stop by three different venues with exclusive wine tastings. Personalized itineraries can also be designed to suit specific needs and interests.

The Lanes and Arcades Tour runs Thursday through Saturday from 10 AM to 2 PM and includes lunch. The Art and Design Tour runs Saturday from 2 to 4 PM and the Sommeliers City Walk runs Tuesday from 5 to 7 PM. The Lanes and Arcades Tour costs AU\$115 per person. The Art and Design Tour costs AU\$70 per person and the Sommeliers City Walk is AU\$135 per person. *For more information: +61 3 9329 9665*

Melbourne River Cruise

One of the best ways to experience Melbourne is from the water on an award-winning cruise on the River Yarra. Guests can relax on the deck and enjoy the running commentary as they glide past

prominent sites and attractions, which vary based on three tour options. The Down River Tour offers superb views of Melbourne's central business district and takes visitors back in time, past the 19th century sailing ship "Polly Woodside" to the sites of the early settlers' landing places. The Up River Tour meanders through the Royal Botanic Gardens and parklands before reaching the Melbourne Olympic Park and the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The Melbourne Highlights Tour combines features of both, illustrating how the unique combination of sites has made the city what it is today.

The Melbourne River Cruise offers catered packages. Tours run daily between 10:30 AM and 3:30 PM, depending on the time of year. The Down River Tour and Up River Tour each cost AU\$22 and the Melbourne Highlights Tour costs AU\$29. *For more information: +61 3 3860 2600*

Old Melbourne Gaol Hangman's Night Tours

A night tour of the Old Melbourne Gaol is something visitors won't soon forget. As the scene of 136 hangings and numerous ghost sightings, the gaol, or jail, has links to some of Australia's key events including the Gold Rush, the Eureka Stockade Rebellion and the Second World War. This night tour, led by brutal hangman Michael Gateley, combines live interpretation with historical fact and is a unique opportunity to hear about some of the gaol's more famous inmates including the notorious Australian outlaw Ned Kelly.

Tours generally run Wednesday, Friday and Saturday at 8:30 PM. Tickets cost AU\$16.50 for children under 15 and AU\$25 for adults. The tour is not recommended for young audiences. *For more information: +61 3 9663 7228*

Melbourne Convention Center Information

Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

The Melbourne Exhibition and Convention Centre is located in the heart of Melbourne, nestled against opposite sides of the River Yarra. This stunning venue has become a jewel in Melbourne's crown, attracting over two million visitors every year including delegates from many international conventions. The centre is currently undergoing an AU\$1 billion construction program, which will establish it as the largest conference and exhibition facility in the country. Today, the complete package is comprised of the exhibition centre and the existing convention centre, plus the new Melbourne Convention Centre.



The new centre boasts a 5,000-seat plenary hall, capable of being divided into three halls, one for 2,507 guests and two for 1,508 guests. The new centre also has 32 conference and meeting rooms. Its striking architecture includes a glass facade affording views across the River Yarra and city skyline. The new centre, scheduled for completion in 2009, will utilize a range of features to achieve a 6 Green Star environmental rating from the Green Building Council of Australia, priming it to become not only the best, but also the most environmentally-friendly venue in the nation.

Existing facilities include roughly 322,900 square feet of exhibit space and 20 meeting rooms at the exhibition centre, which is fully integrated to the new Melbourne Convention Centre, just a few minutes walk across the adjoining footbridge. At the present-day convention centre, planners find about 21,750 square feet of exhibit space, two auditoriums and various conference and meeting rooms for 40 to 2,200 guests.

Designed with conference organizers in mind, the centre's range of amenities for both organizers and attendees are superb. Its convenient location places the centre only 20 minutes from the airport and within walking distance of 17,000 hotel rooms. A new 396-room Hilton hotel is being built as part of the new centre as well. Computer networking to all meeting rooms, theaters and exhibition spaces is provided along with comprehensive and professional audio-visual services. The new convention centre will come fully-equipped with the cutting edge of conference technology. Further services and amenities include in-house catering for any type of function, security services and a total of 1,640 parking spaces.

PO Box 286
WTC Post Office
Melbourne, VIC 8005
Australia
Phone: +61 3 9235 8000

Other convention centers in the Melbourne region

Royal Exhibition Building

Carlton Gardens
11 Nicholson Street
Carlton VIC, 3053
Australia
Phone: +61 3 9270 5000
Total Meeting Sq Ft - 129,166

Melbourne Airport Information

Melbourne Airport (*MEL*)

Located about a 20-minute drive northwest of the city, Melbourne Airport is the city's main international and domestic airport. Often referred to as Tullamarine, the city in which it is located, the airport has two runways and four terminals. Handling over 21 million passengers and 180,500 aircraft movements from 2006 to 2007 has made it the 2nd busiest airport in Australia. Over 450 international flights run every week and 390 flights run daily to major cities in Australia. Melbourne Airport has been ranked as one of the top 5 worldwide airports many times and has been the recipient of accolades including the International Air Transport Association Eagle Award and two national tourism awards.

Not just a travel hub, Melbourne Airport is a shopping and dining experience. Guests can browse over 50 specialty stores providing a huge selection of tax free music, clothes, Australian produce, surf wear, jewelry and much more. Nine restaurants and bars and 12 cafes offer a range of international and local beer selections, coffee, snacks and heavier fare for long layovers. For a fresh pizza and glass of wine, the Fly bar in T3 Departures offers a pleasant retro-style atmosphere.

Recognizing the need to expand, Melbourne Airport started work in January 2008 to upgrade its international terminal. At a total cost of over AU\$330 million, the terminal will be expanded over the next five years to include a further 269,000 square feet of space. Works were also undertaken in late 2007 to prepare for the arrival of the Airbus A380, which has been bought by a number of airlines servicing Melbourne.

The airport operates 24 hours a day and is not under curfew like other Australian airports such as that of Sydney. Five parking options operate 24/7 including short-term, multilevel long-term, long-term, business and express lots.

Airline carriers serving Melbourne Airport

- Air China
- Air Mauritius
- Air New Zealand
- Air New Zealand Cargo
- Air Pacific
- Air Vanuatu
- Atlas Air
- Australian air Express
- Cargolux
- Cathay Pacific
- Cathay Pacific Cargo
- China Eastern Airlines
- China Southern Airlines
- Emirates Airline
- Garuda Indonesia
- China Eastern Airlines
- China Southern Airlines
- Eastern Australia Airlines
- Emirates
- Etihad Airways
- Garuda Indonesia
- Korean Air
- Malaysia Airlines
- MASkargo
- OzJet
- Philippine Airlines
- Korean Air
- Malaysia Airlines
- Norfolk Air
- Philippine Airlines
- Qantas (International)
- Qantas (Domestic)
- Regional Express
- Skywest Airlines

- Singapore Airlines
- Singapore Airlines Cargo
- Thai Airways International
- Tiger Airways Australia
- Toll Priority
- United Airlines
- Vietnam Airlines
- Virgin Blue

Melbourne Train Information

Flinders Street Station

Flinders Street Station is both a prominent Melbourne landmark and the main hub for suburban trains. The train network in Melbourne, run by Connex, is mostly electric and has 15 lines serving the 200 stations of the Melbourne region. Within the city, an underground loop travels to and from Parliament, Melbourne Central, Flagstaff and Southern Cross stops.



Trains generally run Monday through Saturday from 5 AM to midnight, making stops every 10 minutes during peak hours, and Sunday from 8 AM to 11 PM. Day, commuter and leisure tickets are available and vary in price based on type and distance.

Melbourne Public Transportation

Melbourne's public transportation system is integrated so as to make the Metcard, the city's automated ticketing system, applicable on all train, tram and bus services in the metropolitan region. Various Metcard types can be purchased, including two-hour, daily and weekly passes. Fare is based on card type and the number of zones travelers visit – either Zone 1, Zone 2 or both.

Two-hour fare is AU\$3.50 for Zone 1, AU\$2.70 for Zone 2 or AU\$5.50 for both. Daily fare is AU\$6.50 for Zone 1, AU\$4.60 for Zone 2 or AU\$10.10 for both. Reduced fares are available for students and seniors. Cards can be purchased online, by phone at various retail outlets or at certain stations. *For more information: +61 3 9619 5200*

Yarra Trams

Yarra Tram's extensive system covers 152 miles of track, with 500 trams and 1,813 stops, making it the largest tram network in the world. Trams service multiple stops in the downtown area as well as inner suburbs including Richmond and St Kilda. Trams run Monday through Saturday from 5 AM to midnight and Sunday from 7 AM to 11 PM. Trams run every six to eight minutes during peak hours and every 12 minutes during off-peak hours.



City Circle Tram

The City Circle tourist tram is a hop-on, hop-off service that provides visitors with a free mode of transport for getting around downtown to Melbourne's biggest attractions such as the Old Treasury Building, Parliament House, Princess Theatre and the newly revitalized Docklands precinct. The tram runs every 12 minutes Thursday through Saturday from 10 AM to 9 PM and Sunday through Wednesday from 10 AM to 6 PM. Fare is free.



Buses

Melbourne's bus network services the same routes as trams as well as a few destinations not serviced by other transportation methods. Almost 300 bus routes run either directly or with train and tram connections to shopping centers, sporting venues, tourist attractions, parks, hospitals and schools. Night buses service nine major routes from the city to Melbourne's outer suburbs. Normal service generally runs from 6 AM to midnight.

NightRider Buses

The NightRider buses provide transportation to those travelling between the city and the suburbs during the early morning hours. Buses travel from Swanston Street to Bayswater, Belgrave, Craigieburn, Croydon, Lilydale and Dandenong. NightRider buses run every hour Saturday and Sunday from 12:30 to 4:30 AM.

Melbourne City Tourist Shuttle Bus

The Melbourne City Tourist Shuttle is a free bus service that complements the free City Circle Tram. Audio commentary and a brochure provide information on the key attractions that make up the 15 stops made around the edge of the central business district. The service runs daily every 15 minutes between 10 AM and 4 PM. Fare is free.

Rental Cars

Rental car companies Avis, Budget, Europcar, Hertz and Thrifty operate at Melbourne Airport. Rental offices are located on the ground floor of the Short Term Car Park, and information desks are in the Melbourne Airport domestic terminals.

Taxis

Taxis are numerous in Melbourne so guests should have no difficulty in flagging one down. Fares start at AU\$3.20 and increase at a rate of AU\$1.53 per kilometer. Guests should expect surcharges for road tolls. Taxi fare for a trip to the city from the airport is about AU\$30.

Distance to...

- **Geelong, VIC** **41 miles**
- **Ballarat, VIC** **63 miles**
- **Traralgon, VIC** **89 miles**
- **Shepparton, VIC** **102 miles**
- **Canberra, ACT** **294 miles**
- **Sydney, NSW** **443 miles**