



Australian Government
Director of National Parks

TOURISM AUSTRALIA



Sydney Harbour

A spellbinding taste of Australia's natural wonder and heritage

Surrounding Australia's stunning gateway city, Sydney Harbour National Landscape unfolds from spectacular waterways at every turn. Iconic native wildlife, ancient bushland, rich marine life and intriguing heritage lie just minutes from a vibrant modern city.

This bewitching natural environment stretches along the New South Wales coast from Barrenjoey Headland in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, through Sydney Harbour National Park, west to Parramatta Park and south to Royal National Park. It takes in Port Jackson, Botany Bay, Port Hacking and the rivers and inlets of the Parramatta, Lane Cove, Hawkesbury and Georges Rivers.

Nature trails, picnic areas and superb swimming spots are enhanced by ancient Aboriginal sites, stories of the Dreamtime and convict sites that provide a glimpse into the life of early European settlers.

Immerse yourself in the spellbinding landscape of Sydney Harbour for your first sense of the unforgettable experiences of Australia's National Landscapes.

AN EXTRAORDINARY LIVING HARBOUR

Port Jackson, the natural harbour of Sydney and Australia's most iconic estuarine system, was formed by the flooding of an ancient river valley. Beneath the bustling water traffic lives an incredible wealth of marine life - including more than 580 fish species, migrating whales, dolphins and kelp forests with seahorses and sea dragons.

Discover Sydney's very own population of little penguins. You may be lucky to catch a glimpse of the world's smallest penguins near their nesting grounds, but the best place is Penguin Cove at Manly Sea Life Sanctuary. Go for a summer swim at Nielsen Park or Clifton Gardens to spot a seahorse or two. Take a winter stroll along a headland nature trail for a chance to see humpback or southern right whales. Get up close to marine life on a snorkelling or diving adventure at Clovelly or the water surrounding Bare Island - look out for the blue groper! Kayaking is a great way to explore the landscape; head to the Ramsar-listed wetlands of Towra Point Aquatic Reserve in Botany Bay or try Pittwater, Lane Cove or Middle Harbour for secluded bays, beaches and rivers.

SIGHTS AND SMELLS OF THE BUSH

Protecting more than 35,000 hectares of bushland, much of it national park, this landscape offers easy access to Australia's unique plants and animals. Towering eucalypts with their distinctive Australian scent are everywhere. Flowering waratahs, banksias, bottlebrushes, grevilleas, wattles and tea trees are magnets to native birds, butterflies, possums and flying foxes.

THE LONG-NOSED BANDICOOT

The long-nosed bandicoot is a small grey-brown nocturnal marsupial that forages at night and sleeps by day in nests made from plant materials. Its very long nose has adapted for digging insects and small invertebrate prey, leaving small snout shaped holes behind. Young are born after a pregnancy of about 12 days, one of the shortest known of any mammal.

This small creature was once abundant around Sydney, but rapid urban development has reduced the dense vegetation available for shelter and introduced new threats to survival such as cars, cats and dogs.

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service and North Head landowners work closely together to secure the future of North Head's endangered population, which now stands at around 110 individuals.



Long-nosed Bandicoot

More than 300 bird species including the lyrebird and yellow-tailed black cockatoo have been sighted in Royal National Park. Manly's North Head conserves more than 450 plant species including rare and endangered communities such as the Camfields stringybark and eastern suburbs banksia scrub. Here, you'll see a wealth of seabirds including albatross, and it's also an important habitat for an endangered population of the long-nosed bandicoot.

At sunset, coastal tracks offer amazing seascape vistas and the impressive sight of grey-headed flying foxes making their evening migration across the city skyline.

ABORIGINAL HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

From ancient to contemporary, Sydney Harbour encompasses more than 20,000 years of Aboriginal cultural heritage. Despite colonisation and industrial development over the past two centuries, evidence of the original inhabitants' long connection with the land is everywhere - in rock art and engravings in Ku-ring-gai Chase and Royal National Parks, in the shell middens, rock shelters and engravings at Balls Head and in scarred trees in Parramatta Park. Many of the city's major streets such as Oxford, King and George Streets follow Aboriginal tracks, and the names of suburbs such as Cammeray, Kurnell and Parramatta are derived from words used by Sydney's Aboriginal communities to identify tracts of land.

Cruise Port Jackson with Tribal Warrior to discover the stories of the Cadigal people, and visit *Cadi Jam Ora* – First Encounters Garden – at the Royal Botanic Garden for an insight into local bush foods. Take a Discovery Tour with an Aboriginal guide in Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park or walk the easy Burrawang track in Kamay Botany Bay National Park. For a taste of contemporary Aboriginal culture, take in a Bangarra Dance Theatre performance.

A WINDOW ON EUROPEAN HERITAGE

Stories of European settlement ring out from historic sites throughout the landscape. Kamay Botany Bay National Park is the place where explorer Captain Cook landed in 1770. The harsh early days of the New South Wales penal colony, where thousands of convicts were sent to relieve overcrowded English prisons, come alive in the World Heritage-listed convict site of Cockatoo Island. On this inner harbour island, the brooding sandstone convict gaol with its solitary prison cells, hand-carved silos, guardhouse and convict workshops, stand in stark contrast to World Heritage-listed Old Government House, sitting in 200 acres of parkland overlooking historic Parramatta. Australia's oldest public building, this convict-built British Empire rural retreat allowed the colony's first ten Governors to escape the unsanitary and crime-ridden streets of Sydney Town.



Tribal Warrior experience on Clark Island

A stone's throw from the Harbour Bridge is the historic landmark of Fort Denison. Built in 1857 to protect Sydney from the threat of invasion, it's the only Martello tower ever constructed in Australia and the last one built in the British Empire. The one o'clock cannon still rings out across Sydney each day.

PROTECTING AND PRESERVING

Councils, catchment management authorities and community groups work together to protect and enhance the landscape's water quality, and as a result, the marine environment is brimming with life. Local communities and businesses are also pulling together to protect natural bushland through volunteer work and corporate volunteering programs.



HELP CONSERVE SYDNEY HARBOUR NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

- > Volunteer with the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service – choose from bush regeneration, biodiversity surveys, whale watching and more. www.environment.nsw.gov.au/volunteers/VolunteerNationalPark.htm
- > Join the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney volunteers in guiding, fauna surveying and research projects. www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/support/volunteers
- > Sign up as a Taronga Zoo volunteer keeper or guest services volunteer. www.taronga.org.au/support-us/volunteer/volunteer-programs
- > Get involved with Conservation Volunteers to help deliver conservation projects. www.conservationvolunteers.com.au
- > Find out how you can connect with the local community by volunteering with Bushcare. www.bushcare.org.au



Volunteer Day

For more information on this Landscape or to learn about other naturally beautiful places which offer a different but uniquely Australian experience, visit www.australia.com/nl