

Australian Capital Territory



The Australian Capital Territory (ACT) was carved out of the Limestone Plains, a region of New South Wales 280km southwest of Sydney and 150km inland from the coast. Its weathered ranges, quintessential bushland and untamed landscape are a perfect partner to the tidy city it cradles. Canberra, the Australian capital, is a geometrically designed urban centre, housing the symbols and machinery of a nation's aspirations. Planned to a fine point, it's home to many a national treasure, yet it has also evolved from its bureaucratic origins into a flourishing city of multi-cuisine dining, modish bars and lively festivals. Students, public servants and artists find themselves ushered here for opportunity, but remain after planting roots. As the nexus of Australian political power, Canberra thrives on networking, business lunches and gossip. Politics, scandals and the latest conspiracy theory are never off the agenda, and power brokers or image breakers can be seen scribbling notes in a Manuka café or a Civic bar.

Surrounding Canberra you'll find rustic townships, historic homesteads and thick pockets of bushland. Hikers, bird-watchers and nature connoisseurs will find half of the territory is protected as national park or reserve. There is also accessible Aboriginal rock art and splendid camping. For more genteel pursuits there are cool-climate wineries and the meandering Murrumbidgee River to explore. The surrounding region of southeast New South Wales boasts snow fields, historic towns, more wineries and pristine lakes and rivers, and is yet another reason to base yourself in the capital and see the sights.

HIGHLIGHTS

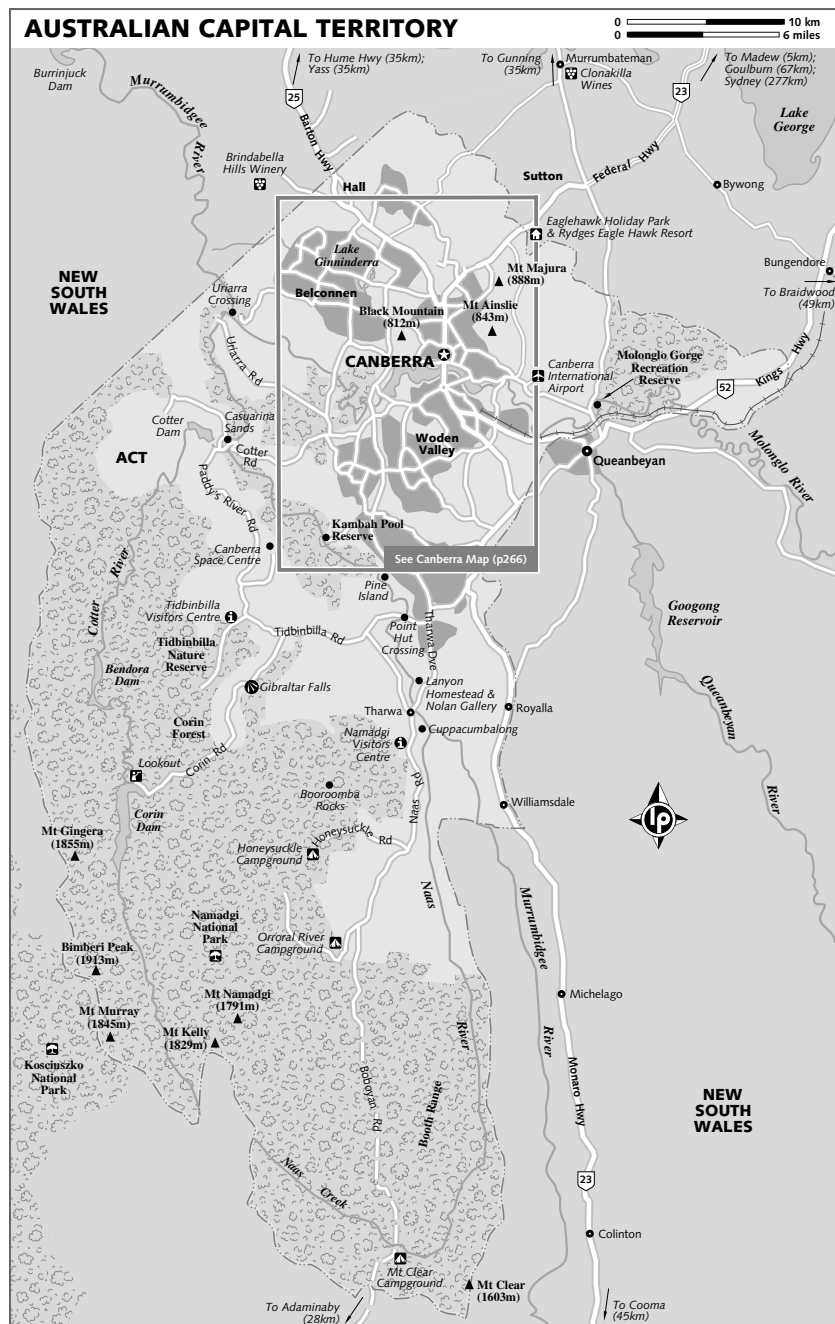
- Stroll the corridors of creativity in the **National Gallery of Australia** (p270)
- Lose yourself for days or silently stand for the last post at the **Australian War Memorial** (p270)
- Hike through the stunning regrowth of **Namadgi National Park** (p285)
- Marvel at Australia's moving-picture and sound recording history at the **National Film & Sound Archive** (p273)
- Negotiate the network of Australiana in the **National Museum of Australia** (p270)
- Paddle, cycle, skate, walk or run around **Lake Burley Griffin** (p270)
- Ogle at the architectural splendour of **Parliament House** (p271)
- Sink yourself into Canberra's budding **pub culture** (p281)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 02

■ POPULATION: 329,000

■ AREA: 2366 SQ KM



AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY FACTS

Eat Italian, Malaysian, Turkish, Chinese, vegetarian, seafood...

Drink 'Middy' (285mL) or 'schooner' (425mL) of Wig and Pen Velvet Cream Stout

Read *How to be a Megalomaniac* by Mungo MacCallum, *The Point* by Marion Halligan

Listen to Udo (pop, jazz, funk), The Gadflys (pop, rock, punk)

Watch Anything at the National Film & Sound Archive (p273)

Avoid Swimming in algal blooms, hailstorms

Locals' nickname Pubes (public servants)

Swim at Cotter River (p284), overflowing with cool clean water and lined by serene picnic spots

Strangest festival SCOTT Australian 24 Hour Mountain Bike Championships (p276), in October, in which thousands of entrants tackle Stromlo Forest on two wheels for 24 hours of hardship. Smarter folk do it in teams

Tackiest tourist attraction Gold Creek Village (p285) souvenir shops

CANBERRA

📍 02 / pop 323,650

Canberra deceives the lazy tourist by presenting a sleepy façade, blanketed by magnificent Australian bush. Orderly and unapologetically suburban, it was once known as the incubator for a uniform public service. But those days are long gone. The city is equally known for its private sector and strong university influence, and locals know that peeling back the cover is a simple affair. Beneath the hushed exterior thrives a dynamic community making the most of their lakeside parks, hills, culture, artistic endeavours and culinary adventures. This city is a celebration of what Australians hold dear – their origins, sacrifices, treasures and values. Iconic cultural landmarks such as the National Museum, War Memorial and Parliament House are symbolic and accessible, informative and free, and, with few exceptions, replete with café and souvenir shop. Canberra is the hub of the ACT and of a much greater region of southern NSW, where bushwalking, cycling, swimming and a host of other activities are the norm.

HISTORY

For over 20,000 years the Ngunnawal Aboriginal people made this country their home. Nomadic by necessity, the seasonal abundance of foods, such as the yam daisies of the plains and the Bogong moths of the high country, precipitated occasional large gatherings of people, and 'Canberra' or 'Kanberra' is believed to be an Aboriginal term for 'meeting place'.

European settlement began in the 1820s and many Ngunnawal people ended up work-

ing on expansive sheep stations. Despite years of persecution, introduced diseases, official disregard and massive environmental change, the Ngunnawal have endured and have increased their profile in recent years.

When Australia's separate colonies were federated in 1901 and became states, the decision to build a national capital was written into the constitution. In 1908 the site was selected, and in 1911 the Commonwealth government created the Federal Capital Territory (changed to the Australian Capital Territory in 1938).

Canberra took over from Melbourne as the seat of national government in 1927, but the city's expansion really got under way after WWII – in the next decade the population trebled to 39,000.

The western and southern outskirts of the city were struck by devastating bushfires in January 2003. The fires claimed four lives, 530 homes, 30 farms and the historic Mt Stromlo Observatory, and decimated large swaths of Namadgi National Park. Almost all of the 5500 hectares of Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, including most wildlife, were destroyed. The regeneration of the fire-scorched landscape, however, began quickly and the area is well worth exploring.

CLIMATE

Summer days across the ACT range from comfortably warm to uncomfortably hot, though the temperature doesn't often top 40°C. Winter days here are invariably cool and sometimes gloriously sunny, with little wind, and often kick off with early morning frost and fog – winter nights hover around 0°C during July.

CANBERRA

INFORMATION

- Canberra Hospital.....1 B4
- Canberra Visitors Centre.....2 C2
- Capital Chemist.....3 C2

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Australian Institute of Sport (AIS).....4 C2
- Australian Reptile Centre.....(see 21)
- Canberra Bicycle Museum.....(see 6)
- Canberra International Sports & Aquatics Centre.....5 B2
- Canberra Space Dome & Observatory.....6 C2
- Cockington Green.....(see 21)
- Ginninderra Village.....(see 21)
- Gold Creek Village.....(see 21)
- Government House.....7 B3
- Mt Stromlo Observatory.....8 A4
- National Dinosaur Museum.....(see 21)
- National Zoo & Aquarium.....9 B3
- Pialligo Estate.....10 D4

EATING

- Royal Australian Mint.....11 B4
- Telstra Tower.....12 B3

SLEEPING

- Blue & White Lodge.....13 C2
- Canberra Carotel.....14 D2
- Australian Motor Village.....15 B2
- Canberra Lodge.....(see 13)
- Miranda Lodge.....(see 13)
- Northbourne Lodge.....(see 13)
- Parkview Lodge.....(see 13)
- Pavilion.....16 C2
- Tall Treys Motel.....17 C2

DRINKING

- All Bar Nun.....(see 3)
- Trinity Bar.....(see 22)

ENTERTAINMENT

- AIS Training Hall.....(see 4)
- Canberra Stadium.....19 B2
- Tilley's Devine Cafe Gallery.....20 C2

SHOPPING

- Aboriginal Dreamings Gallery.....21 B1
- Dickson Shopping Centre.....22 C2
- Kamberra Wine Company.....23 C2

TRANSPORT

- Rumbles.....24 D4

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN MINT.....11 B4

TELSTRA TOWER.....12 B3

DRINKING

- All Bar Nun.....(see 3)
- Trinity Bar.....(see 22)

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- Rumbles.....24 D4

ORIENTATION

Think crop circles in suburbia and you have an aerial picture of this city, conceived on an architect's drawing board with the aid of ruler, compass and protractor. Two great road axes, Kings and Commonwealth Aves, converge at the apex of Capital Hill, which, with Constitution Ave, create Walter Burley Griffin's parliamentary triangle. Kings and Commonwealth Aves span Canberra's central water feature – Lake Burley Griffin – complete with spout, and all roads end with roundabouts.

The main axis starts north of the city when the Federal and Barton Hwys converge into Northbourne Ave which then runs south through the suburbs of Downer, Dickson and Braddon before entering Civic, the city centre. After circling City Hill this axis road becomes Commonwealth Ave and heads across Lake Burley Griffin to Capital Hill.

Capital Hill is encircled by State Circle and Capital Circle, Parkes Way skirts the northern shore of the lake and the rest of the city is made up of suburban satellites, each with their own 'town centres'.

Maps

The **NRMA** (Map p268; ☎ 6240 4630; 6 City Walk, Canberra Centre, Civic; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri) has the *Canberra & Southeast* map (\$7; free if you belong to an affiliated motoring organisation), good for tours of the city and surrounding area. The Canberra Visitors Centre (p269) stocks good city maps and maps for bushwalking in Namadgi National Park (\$4.50). **MapWorld** (Map p268; ☎ 6230 4097; Jolimont Centre, 65 Northbourne Ave, Civic) and the Namadgi Visitor Centre (p285) stock regional topographic maps.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Dymocks (Map p268; ☎ 6257 5057; 177 City Walk, Civic) Large, central bookshop with latest releases.

Electric Shadows Bookshop (Map p268; ☎ 6248 8352; 40 Mort St, Braddon; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Thu, 9am-8pm Fri & Sat, 11am-6pm Sun) This bookshop specialises in books on theatre and film, plus gay and lesbian books and rentable art-house DVDs.

National Library Bookshop (Map p268; ☎ 6262 1424; Parkes Pl, Parkes) Stocks exclusively Australian books, including a superb range of fiction.

Smiths Alternative Bookshop (Map p268; ☎ 6247 4459; 76 Alinga St, Civic) Sells everything from New Age 'science' to gay and lesbian literature.

Emergency

Ambulance (☎ 000, TTY 106)
Canberra Rape Crisis Centre (☎ 6247 2525, TTY 6247 1657) Help 24 hours.
Fire (☎ 000, TTY 106)
Lifeline (☎ 13 11 14) Crisis counselling available 24 hours.
Police (☎ 000, TTY 106)

Internet Access

Public libraries, the Canberra Centre (p282), the interstate bus terminal at the Jolimont Centre (p283) and some hostels have public internet access.

Bytes Internet Cafe (Map p268; ☎ 6239 7070; 47 Jardine St, Kingston; per hr \$8; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat).

Cafe Cactus (Map p268; ☎ 6248 0449; 1/7 Mort St, Civic; per hr \$10; ☎ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri) You can get light meals here.

Internet Resources

Canberra Arts Marketing (www.canberraarts.com.au) Comprehensive events listings.

Canberra Bed & Breakfast Network (www.canberrabandb.com) B&B options in and around Canberra.

National Capital Authority (www.nationalcapital.gov.au) Good for capital history and facts.

Visit Canberra (www.visitcanberra.com.au) What to eat, see, drink and do in Canberra.

Medical Services

Canberra Hospital (Map p266; ☎ 6244 2222, emergency dept ☎ 6244 2611; Yamba Dr, Garran)

Capital Chemist (Map p266; ☎ 6248 7050; Sargood St, O'Connor; ☎ 9am-11pm)

Travellers' Medical & Vaccination Centre (Map p268; ☎ 6257 7156; 5th fl, 8-10 Hobart Pl, Civic; ☎ 8.30am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, to 7pm Thu) Appointments essential.

Money

Major banks and ATMs are abundant. Foreign exchange bureaux include:

American Express (Amex; Map p268; ☎ 1300 139 060; Petrie Plaza, Civic; ☎ 9.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, 9.30am-5pm Fri) Located inside a branch of the Westpac bank.

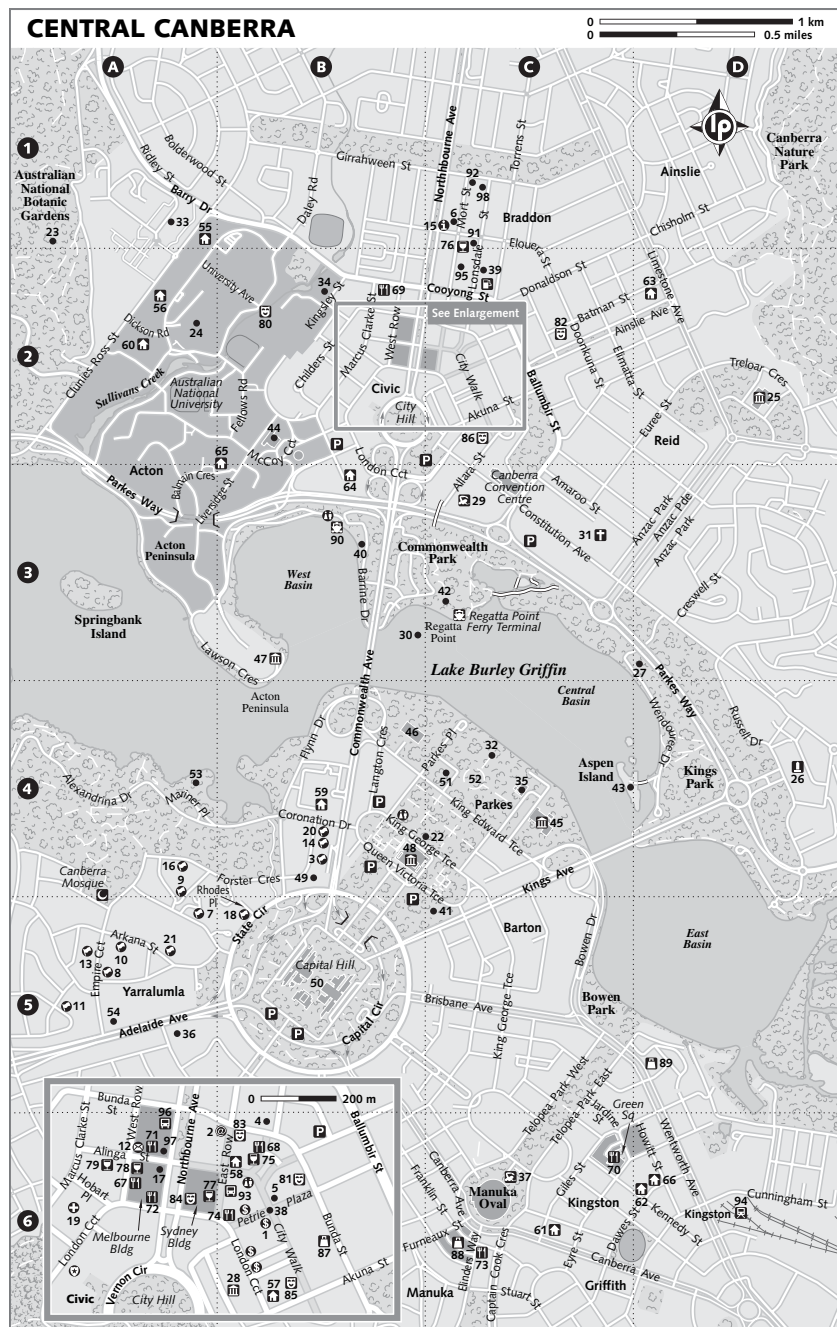
Travelax (Map p268; ☎ 1800 637 642; Canberra Centre, Bunda St, Civic; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-12.30pm Sat) Inside the Harvey World Travel office.

Post

Main post office (☎ 13 13 18; 53-73 Alinga St, Civic) Pick up your poste restante here. Mail can be addressed: poste restante Canberra GPO, Canberra, ACT 2601.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



INFORMATION		National Archives of Australia...41 C5	Ruchi.....(see 88)
American Express.....1 B6	Bytes Internet Cafe.....(see 70)	National Capital Exhibition.....42 C3	Santa Lucia.....(see 70)
Cafe Cactus.....2 B6	Canadian High Commission.....3 B4	National Carillon.....43 C4	Silo.....(see 70)
Citizens Advice Bureau ACT.....4 B6	Dymocks.....5 B6	National Film & Sound Archive.....44 B2	Tosolini's.....74 B6
Electric Shadows Bookshop.....6 C1	French Embassy.....7 A5	National Gallery of Australia.....45 C4	DRINKING ☑
German Embassy.....8 A5	Indonesian Embassy.....9 A4	National Library of Australia.....46 B4	Belgian Beer Cafe.....(see 70)
Irish Embassy.....10 A5	Japanese Embassy.....11 A5	National Museum of Australia.....47 B3	Durham Castle Arms.....(see 70)
Main Post Office.....12 A6	Map World.....(see 96)	National Portrait Gallery.....(see 48)	Filthy McFadden's.....(see 70)
National Library Bookshop.....(see 46)	Netherlands Embassy.....13 A5	Old Parliament House.....48 B4	Hippo Bar.....75 B6
New Zealand High Commission.....14 B4	Singapore High Commission.....16 A4	Papua New Guinea High Commission.....49 B4	Knightsbridge Penthouse.....76 C1
NRMA.....15 C1	Smiths Alternative Bookshop.....17 A6	Parliament House.....50 B5	Kremlin.....(see 96)
Travelx.....(see 87)	South African Embassy.....18 B5	Questacon - National Science & Technology Centre.....51 C4	Phoenix.....77 A6
Travellers' Medical & Vaccination Centre.....19 A6	UK High Commission.....20 B4	Reconciliation Place.....52 C4	PJ O'Reilly's.....78 A6
US Embassy.....21 A5	US Embassy.....21 A5	Southern Cross Yacht Club.....53 A4	Wig & Pen.....79 A6
SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES	Aboriginal Tent Embassy.....22 C4	St John's Schoolhouse Museum.....(see 31)	ENTERTAINMENT ☑
Australian National Botanic Gardens.....23 A1	Australian National University.....24 A2	Thai Embassy.....54 A5	ANU Union Bar.....80 B2
Australian War Memorial.....25 D2	Australian-American Memorial.....26 D4	SLEEPING ☑	Canberra Theatre Centre.....(see 28)
Blundell's Cottage.....27 D3	Canberra Museum & Gallery.....28 B6	Burton & Garraan Hall.....56 A2	Club Mombasa.....81 B6
Canberra Olympic Pool.....29 C3	Captain Cook Memorial Water Jet.....30 B3	Canberra YHA Hostel.....57 B6	Dendy Canberra Centre.....(see 87)
Church of St John the Baptist.....31 C3	Commonwealth Place.....32 C4	City Walk Hotel.....58 B6	Gorman House Arts Centre.....82 C2
Commonwealth Place.....32 C4	CSIRO Discovery.....33 A1	Hyatt Hotel Canberra.....59 B4	Greater Union.....83 B6
Drill Hall Gallery.....34 B2	High Court of Australia.....35 C4	John XXIII College.....60 A2	Hippo Bar.....(see 75)
Lake Burley Griffin Boat Hire.....(see 90)	Lodge.....36 A5	Kingston Hotel.....61 C6	icbm & Meche.....84 A6
Lodge.....36 A5	Manuka Swimming Pool.....37 C6	Motel Monaro.....62 D6	Ticketek.....85 B6
Merry-go-round.....38 C2	Manuka Swimming Pool.....37 C6	Novotel.....(see 96)	Toast.....86 C2
Mountain Designs.....39 C2	Manuka Swimming Pool.....37 C6	Orlans Hotel Canberra.....63 D2	SHOPPING ☑
Mr Spokes Bike Hire.....40 B3	Manuka Swimming Pool.....37 C6	Pacific International Apartments - Capital Tower.....64 B3	Canberra Centre.....87 B6
		University House.....65 B2	Craft ACT.....(see 28)
		Ursula College.....(see 60)	Gorman House Arts Centre Markets.....(see 82)
		Victor Lodge.....66 D6	Manuka Shopping Centre.....88 C6
			Old Bus Depot Markets.....89 D5
			TRANSPORT
			Action Information Kiosk.....(see 93)
			Acton Park Ferry Terminal.....90 B3
			Avis.....91 C1
			Budget.....92 C1
			Civic Bus Interchange.....93 B6
			Café in the House.....(see 48)
			Café della Piazza.....68 B6
			CountryLink Travel Centre.....94 D6
			Greyhound Australia.....(see 96)
			Guidedpost Travel.....(see 96)
			Hertz.....95 C2
			Interstate Bus Terminal.....(see 96)
			Jolimont Centre.....96 A6
			Murrays.....(see 96)
			Qantas.....97 A6
			Taxi Rank.....(see 83)
			Thrifty.....98 C1

Tourist Information

Canberra Visitors Centre (☎ 1300 554 114, 6205 0044; www.visitcanberra.com.au; 330 Northbourne Ave, Dickson; ☹ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) For a wealth of information on the region, head to this centre, operated by the ACT's peak tourist information body, the Canberra Tourism & Events Corporation.

Citizens Advice Bureau ACT (☎ 6248 7988; www.citizensadvice.org.au; New Griffin Centre, Genge St, Civic; ☹ 10am-4pm Mon-Tue & Thu-Fri, to 1pm Wed) The helpful people here can provide you with plenty of information on the community services and facilities available in the ACT.

SIGHTS

Canberra's significant edifices, museums and galleries are dotted around Lake Burley Griffin. Wheelchair-bound visitors will find that most sights are fully accessible.

Those keen on visiting Questacon (p272), the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS; p273) and Cockington Green (p285) should pick up a **3-in-1 Ticket** (adult/child/concession/family \$37/20/27/103), which gives access to all three attractions; buy it at any of the sites or the visitors centre.

Bus 34 is handy for many of the following sights.

Lake Burley Griffin

Named after Canberra's architect, **Lake Burley Griffin** (Map p268) was filled by damming the Molonglo River in 1963 with the 33m-high Scrivener Dam. Around its 35km shore are many places of interest.

Built in 1970 to mark the bicentenary of Cook's landfall, the **Captain Cook Memorial Water Jet** (Map p268; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-4pm, also 7-9pm daylight saving months) flings a 6-tonne column of water up to 147m into the air, and sometimes gives free showers, despite its automatic switch-off in strong winds. There is a skeleton globe at nearby **Regatta Point** on which Cook's three great voyages are traced; also close is the **National Capital Exhibition** (Map p268; ☎ 6257 1068; www.nationalcapital.gov.au/visiting/attractions/national_capital_exhibition; Barrine Dr; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), displaying the city's history. Further east is the stone-and-slab **Blundells' Cottage** (Map p268; ☎ 6257 1068; Wendouree Dr; adult/child/family \$4/2/10; ☎ 11am-4pm), built in 1860 to house workers on the surrounding estate, and now a reminder of the area's early farming history.

On Aspen Island is the 50m-high **National Carillon** (Map p268; ☎ 6257 1068; ☎ recitals 12.45-1.35pm Tue & Thu, 2.35-3.35pm Sat & Sun), a gift from Britain on Canberra's 50th anniversary in 1963. The tower has 55 bronze bells, weighing from 7kg to 6 tonnes. Bookings are required for **Carillon tours** (adult/child/family \$8/4/20; ☎ 12.45pm Mon, Wed & Fri).

On the northern shore fronting Old Parliament House is **Reconciliation Place**, where artwork represents the nation's commitment to the cause of reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

National Museum of Australia

This **museum** (☎ 1800 026 132, 6208 5000; www.nma.gov.au; Lawson Cres, Acton Peninsula; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) is one big abstract Australian storybook. Using creativity, controversy, humour and self-contradiction, the National Museum dismantles national identity, and in the process provokes visitors to come up with ideas of their own. There are lots of attendants on hand to help you navigate exhibitions on environmental change, indigenous culture, national icons and more, and you can take one-hour **guided tours** (adult/child/family \$7.50/5/20). The museum can be a bit confusing and it's recommended that you don't miss the introductory 'C' show.

Bus 34 runs here. There's also a free bus on weekends and public holidays, departing regularly from 10.30am from platform 7 in the **Civic bus interchange** (Map p268).

National Gallery of Australia

The **National Gallery** (Map p268; ☎ 6240 6502; www.nga.gov.au; Parkes Pl, Parkes; permanent collection admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) has a stunning collection of over 100,000 works of art representing four major areas: Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander, Australian (from colonial to contemporary), Asian and international. The spectacular Art of the Indian Subcontinent gallery showcases one of the largest Subcontinent collections outside of India. The Australian treasures range from traditional Aboriginal art to Sydney Nolan's Ned Kelly series.

There's also a striking Sculpture Garden, drawings, photographs, furniture, ceramics, fashion, textiles and silverware. Visiting exhibitions usually attract an admission fee. In addition to regular all-inclusive **guided tours** (☎ 11am & 2pm), there's also a **tour** (☎ 11am Thu & Sun) focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Visually impaired visitors should ask about the *Braille Guide*.

Australian War Memorial

In a stately position, overlooking Anzac Pde and Lake Burley Griffin, the magnificent **war memorial** (Map p268; ☎ 6243 4211; www.awm.gov.au; Treloar Cres, Campbell; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) is one of the finest museums in the country. It houses an enormous collection of pictures, dioramas, relics and exhibitions detailing the events, weapons and human toll of wartime; most of the heavy machinery is arrayed in Anzac Hall which features an impressive **sound-and-light show** (☎ hourly from 10am). Entombed among the mosaics of the Hall of Memory is the Unknown Australian Soldier, whose remains were returned from a WWI battlefield in 1993 and who symbolises all Australian war casualties. Even if you're not a history buff, the engaging and affecting contents of this massive edifice are sufficient for two full days of exploration.

There are free 90-minute guided tours; alternatively, purchase the *Self-Guided Tour* leaflet (\$3).

Along Anzac Pde, which is Canberra's broad commemorative way, there are 11 poignant memorials to various campaigns and campaigners.

Australian National Botanic Gardens

Spread over 90 invigorating hectares on Black Mountain's lower slopes are these beautiful **gardens** (Map p268; ☎ 6250 9450; www.anbg.gov.au/anbg; Clunies Ross St, Acton; admission free; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mar-Dec, to 6pm weekdays & 8pm weekends Jan), devoted to the growth, study and promotion of Australian floral diversity. While enjoying the gardens' tranquillity, take the **Aboriginal Plant Use Walk** (1km, 45 minutes), which passes through the cool Rainforest Gully. The Eucalypt Lawn is peppered with 600 species of this quintessential Aussie tree.

The **visitors centre and bookshop** (☎ 9.30am-4.30pm) is the departure point for free **guided walks** (☎ 11am & 2pm, also 10am summer). Nearby is **Hudsons in the Gardens** (☎ 6248 9680; mains \$10-15; ☎ breakfast & lunch), a pleasant café with a verdant aspect.

Parliament House

The symbolical and extravagant **Parliament House** (☎ 6277 5399; www.aph.gov.au; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm)

opened in 1988 after a \$1.1 billion construction project. The building is dug into Capital Hill, its roof covered in grass and topped by a 81m-high flagpole with a flag the size of a double-decker bus. The rooftop lawns are easily accessible, encompass 23 hectares of landscaped gardens, and provide superb 360-degree views of the city. See the Design for a Nation boxed text (below) for specifics about the magnificent interior.

Free 45-minute **guided tours** (☎ every 30min 9am-4pm) are available on nonsitting days and 20-minute tours on sitting days, but you're welcome to self-navigate and watch parliamentary proceedings from the public galleries. Tickets for question time (2pm on sitting days) in the House of Representatives are free but must be booked through the Sergeant at Arms (☎ 6277 4889); tickets aren't required for the Senate Chamber.

Old Parliament House

The venerable **Old Parliament House** (Map p268; ☎ 6270 8222; www.oph.gov.au; King George Tce, Parkes;

DESIGN FOR A NATION

Opened in 1988, Parliament House was designed by Romaldo Giurgola of Mitchell, Giurgola & Thorp architects, winners of a design competition that attracted 329 entries from 28 countries. Its splendid interior incorporates different combinations of Australian timbers in each main section and more than 3000 original artworks.

The structure was built into the hillside and covered by grass to preserve the site's original landscape. Great swathes of neatly clipped lawn gently rise over the roof where a shiny metallic flagpole soars 81m to hoist a flag the size of a double-decker bus; a monumental, if unintentional, tribute to the Aussie backyard, the galvanised Hill's hoist and a beach towel.

The main axis of Parliament House runs northeast-southwest in a direct line with Old Parliament House, the Australian War Memorial and Mt Ainslie, Burley Griffin's original 'land axis'. Two high, granite-faced walls curve out from the axis to the corners of the building; the House of Representatives (east of the walls) and the Senate (to the west) are linked to the centre by covered walkways.

Enter the building across the 90,000-piece **forecourt mosaic** by Michael Nelson Tjakamarra – the theme of which is 'a meeting place', representing possum and wallaby Dreaming – and through the white marble Great Verandah at the northeastern end of the main axis. In the foyer, the grey-green marble columns symbolise a forest, and marquetry wall panels are inlaid with designs of Australian flora.

The first floor overlooks the Great Hall and its 20m-long tapestry was inspired by the original Arthur Boyd painting of eucalypt forest hanging outside the hall. Beyond it is the Members' Hall. In the public gallery above the Great Hall is the 16m-long embroidery, created by more than 500 members of the Embroiders Guild of Australia. Both works make subtle references to European settlement.

The Great Hall is the centre of the building, with the flagpole above it and passages to chambers on each side. One of only four known copies of the 1297 Magna Carta is on display here – so close you could almost touch it, if it wasn't for the gas-filled, glass casing. South of the Members' Hall are the committee rooms and ministers' offices; visitors are welcome to view committee rooms and attend some of the proceedings.

adult/concession/family \$2/1/5; ☎ 9am-5pm) was the seat of government from 1927 to 1988 and is a great place to get a whiff of bygone parliamentary activity, be it peering through the spyhole into the prime minister's office, re-acquainting yourself with the 1975 dismissal, silently addressing the House of Representatives, or buying your own Hansard bookend from the gift shop. There are free 45-minute **guided tours** (☎ 9.30am, 10.15am, 11am, 11.45am, 12.45pm, 1.30pm, 2.15pm, 3pm & 3.45pm), or pick up the *Self-Guided Tour* brochure. It also has a wonderful café.

The building incorporates the mesmerising **National Portrait Gallery** (☎ 6270 8210; www.portrait.gov.au) which exhibits painting, photography and new-media portraiture. It has a lakeside annexe at **Commonwealth Place**.

Opposite the main entrance to Old Parliament House is the culturally significant Aboriginal Tent Embassy (Map p268).

National Zoo & Aquarium

Nestled behind Scrivener Dam is this wonderful **zoo and aquarium** (Map p266; ☎ 6287 8400; www.nationalzoo.com.au; Lady Denman Dr, Yarralumla; adult/child/concession/family \$21.50/11.50/17.50/62.50; ☎ 10am-5pm), to which you should definitely devote a few hours. It has a roll call of fascinating animals, ranging from capuchins to sharks, and includes Australia's largest collection of big cats, including tigers (the unnatural result of breeding tiger-lion crosses in captivity,

a practice thankfully discontinued). Heavily promoted are the additional tours where you can cuddle a cheetah (\$150) or take a **tour** (adult/child from \$125/65) behind the scenes to hand-feed a tiger, and much more.

Questacon – National Science & Technology Centre

The hands-on **National Science & Technology Centre** (Questacon; ☎ 1800 020 603, 6270 2800; www.questacon.edu.au; adult/child/concession/family \$15.50/9/10.50/46; ☎ 9am-5pm) is a child magnet, with its lively, educational and just-plain-fun interactive science and technology exhibits. Kids can explore the physics of sport, athletics and fun parks, cause tsunamis and take shelter from cyclones and earthquakes. Exciting science shows, presentations and puppet shows included in the admission price.

Canberra Museum & Gallery

This stylish **museum and gallery** (Map p268; ☎ 6207 3968; www.museumsandgalleries.act.gov.au/museum/index.asp; Civic Sq, London Circuit, Civic; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-5pm Sat & Sun) is ostensibly devoted to Canberra's social history and visual arts. The interesting permanent exhibition, *Reflecting Canberra*, includes a charred dishwasher salvaged from a house destroyed in the 2003 bushfire, while visiting collections have run the aesthetic gamut from traditional Palestinian crafts to Korean sculptors.

THE ABORIGINAL TENT EMBASSY *Lindsay Brown*

A smouldering log fire, a lop-sided tent and a wobbly caravan outside Old Parliament House are just too intriguing for the Beijing tourists. A discussion rambles from the British Crown's German ancestry (a bronzed King George stands nearby) to how long the fire has been burning, to a discussion on land rights, and finally a photo with Robert Craigie. 'My photo must be all around the world. We get them all here. They know ... everybody comes.' Robert is a Murri from Kamilaroi country, around Moree, NSW. His elder brother Billy was one of the original four 'representatives' who established the 'embassy' and spent that first cold night sheltering under an umbrella. On this sunny almost-spring day, Robert is one of the few left at the Tent Embassy while the area is being rested – the grass and trees are given a chance to rejuvenate the traditional way.

The Tent Embassy was established on Australia Day, 26 January 1972, as a protest against the denial of land rights and self-determination. Through official condemnation and destruction, followed by phoenix-like revival it quickly became a symbol of resistance and is where the Aboriginal flag first gained prominence. Since then the Tent Embassy has waxed and waned over the decades and the politicians built a bigger house in their backyard and moved away. But this poignant camp always manages to remind the world, especially on Australia/Sovereignty/Invasion Day, that Australia still has much to do in regard to reconciliation, land rights and the fair treatment of its indigenous people. As a living, breathing reality check and education facility, it has no peers. The embassy's most recent threat was to replace it with yet another static museum/memorial, presumably with a digital visitor counter and café.

National Film & Sound Archive

This excellent **archive** (☎ 6248 2000; www.nfsa.afc.gov.au; McCoy Circuit, Acton; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) preserves Australian moving-picture and sound recordings for posterity. Highlights include the absorbing permanent exhibition *Sights + Sounds of a Nation*, 100 years of audio and video recordings from Norman Gunston's idiosyncratic interviews to the 1943 Oscar-awarded propaganda flick *Kokoda Front Line*. There are also temporary exhibitions, talks and film screenings.

Lookouts

Black Mountain (812m), northwest of the city, is topped by the 195m-high **Telstra Tower** (Map p266; ☎ 6219 6111; Black Mountain Dr; adult/child \$4.40/1.90; ☎ 9am-10pm), which has a great windblown vista from 66m up its shaft. In the northeast, **Mt Ainslie** (843m) has fine views day and night; walking tracks to the mountain start behind the War Memorial and end at **Mt Majura** (888m).

High Court of Australia

The grandiose **High Court** (Map p268; ☎ 6270 6811; www.hcourt.gov.au; Parkes Pl, Parkes; admission free; ☎ 9.45am-4.30pm Mon-Fri, closed public holidays) was dubbed 'Gar's Mahal' when it opened in 1980, a reference to Sir Garfield Barwick, chief justice during the building's construction.

The rarefied heights of the foyer (that's a 24m-high ceiling!) and main courtroom are in keeping with the building's name and position as the highest court in the Australian judicial system. Have a chat to a knowledgeable attendant about judicial life, and check out the murals and paintings adorning the walls.

National Library of Australia

The **National Library** (Map p268; ☎ 6262 1111; www.nla.gov.au; Parkes Pl, Parkes; admission free; ☎ main reading room 9am-9pm Mon-Thu, to 5pm Fri & Sat, 1.30-5pm Sun) was established in 1901 and has since accumulated over six million items, most of which can be accessed in one of eight reading rooms. Be sure to check out the **Exhibition Gallery** (admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) highlighting the library's diverse visual treats. Bookings are required for the free, customised **guided tours** (☎ 6262 1271) or you can simply join the **Behind-the-Scenes Tour** (☎ 12.30pm, Thu).

National Archives of Australia

Canberra's original post office now houses the **National Archives** (Map p268; ☎ 6212 3600; www.naa.gov

.au; Queen Victoria Tce, Parkes; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm), a repository for Commonwealth government records in the form of personal papers, photographs, films, maps and paintings. There are short-term special exhibits, but the centre-piece exhibit is the Federation Gallery and its original charters, including Australia's 1900 Constitution Act and the 1967 amendment ending constitutional discrimination against Aboriginal people. Records of military service and emigration can be accessed for those keen on exploring their ancestry.

Australian National University

The attractive grounds of the **ANU** (Map p268; ☎ 6125 5111; Acton; www.anu.edu.au), founded in 1946, lie between Civic and Black Mountain and make for a pleasant wander. Drop into the **Drill Hall Gallery** (☎ 6125 5832; Kingsley St; admission free; ☎ noon-5pm Wed-Sun) to see special exhibitions and paintings from the university's art collection; a permanent fixture is the near-phosphorescent hue of Sidney Nolan's *Riverbend*. Collect the *ANU Sculpture Walk* brochure for a fine-arts appreciation of the university grounds.

Australian Institute of Sport

The country's elite and aspiring-elite athletes hone their sporting prowess at the **AIS** (Map p266; ☎ 6214 1444; www.ausport.gov.au/tours; Leverrier Cres, Bruce). The 90-minute **tours** (adult/child/concession/family \$13/7/10/36; ☎ 10am, 11.30am, 1pm & 2.30pm) are led by resident athletes, with information on training routines and diets, displays on Australian champions and the Sydney Olympics, and interactive exhibits where you can publicly humble yourself at basketball, rowing and skiing.

Other Attractions

Peek through the gates of the prime minister's official residence, the **Lodge** (Map p268; Adelaide Ave, Deakin), and the governor-general's official residence, **Government House** (Map p264; Dunrossil Dr, Yarralumla). **Scrivener Dam lookout** (Map p264) gives a good view of both.

The **Royal Australian Mint** (Map p266; ☎ 6202 6800; www.ramint.gov.au; Denison St, Deakin; admission free; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) is Australia's biggest money-making operation. It has a gallery showcasing the history of Australian coinage, where you can learn about the 1813 'holey dollar' and its enigmatic offspring, the 'dump'.

Several of Canberra's 80-odd diplomatic missions are architecturally interesting and periodically open to the public. The **Thai embassy** (Map p268; Empire Circuit, Yarralumla), with its pointy orange-tiled roof, is reminiscent of Bangkok temples. The **Papua New Guinea high commission** (Map p268; ☎ 6273 3322; Forster Cres, Yarralumla) resembles a *haus tamberan* (spirit house) from the Sepik region and has a **cultural display** (🕒 9am-1pm & 2-4pm Mon-Fri).

The 79m-tall **Australian-American Memorial** (Map p268; Kings Ave, Russell), a pillar topped by an eagle, recognises US support for Australia during WWII.

The **Church of St John the Baptist** (Map p268; Constitution Ave, Reid) was finished in 1845, its stained-glass windows donated by pioneer families. The adjoining **St John's Schoolhouse Museum** (Map p268; ☎ 6249 6839; Constitution Ave, Reid; admission by donation; 🕒 10am-noon Wed, 2-4pm Sat & Sun) houses memorabilia from Canberra's first school.

The **Canberra Bicycle Museum** (Map p266; ☎ 6247 1363; 3 Rosevear Pl; admission by donation; 🕒 10am-4pm Wed, 11am-3pm Sat) has an astonishing collection of old clankers including a penny farthing and the aptly named Boneshaker. You can make planetary observations at the **Canberra Space Dome & Observatory** (Map p266; ☎ 6248 5333; www.ctc.asn.au/planetarium; 72 Hawdon Pl, Dickson; adult/child/family \$10/6/28; 🕒 7.30 & 8.30pm winter, 7.30 & 9.30pm summer, Tue-Sat); bookings essential. Or, learn about Australian innovative scientific research – such as gene technology and climate research – at **CSIRO Discovery** (Map p268; ☎ 6246 4646; www.csiro.au; Clunies Ross St, Acton; adult/child/family \$6/3/15; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri).

ACTIVITIES

Canberra's lakes, mountains and climate offer abundant bushwalking, swimming, cycling and other activities.

Boating

Lake Burley Griffin Boat Hire (Map p268; ☎ 6249 6861; Acton Jetty, Civic; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-dusk Sat & Sun, closed May-Aug) has canoe, kayak and paddleboat hire (from \$12 per hour).

Bushwalking

Tidbinilla Nature Reserve (p285), southwest of the city, has marked walking tracks. Another great area for bushwalking is **Namadgi National Park** (p285), one end of the challenging 655km-long Australian Alps Walking Track.

Local bushwalking maps are available at Map World (p267) and **Mountain Designs** (Map p268; ☎ 6247 7488; 6 Lonsdale St, Braddon). The **Namadgi National Park** map (\$4.40), available from the Canberra and Namadgi Visitor Centres, details 22 walks.

Cycling

Canberra has one of the most extensive cycle-path networks of any Australian city, with dedicated routes making it almost possible to tour the entire city without touching a road. The visitors centre sells the **Canberra Cycleways** map (\$6) and **Canberra & Queenbeyan Cycling & Walking Map** (\$8), the latter published by **Pedal Power ACT** (www.pedalpower.org.au).

Mr Spokes Bike Hire (Map p268; ☎ 6257 1188; Barrine Dr, Civic; 🕒 9am-5pm Wed-Sun, daily during school holidays) is near the Acton Park ferry terminal; bike hire per hour/half-day/full day costs \$12/30/40. Canberra YHA (p277), and Victor Lodge (p277) also rent out bikes. **Row'n'Ride** (☎ 0410 547 838) delivers bicycles (hire per day/week \$40/95) to your door and **Brindabella Bike Tours** (☎ 6242 6276, 0407-426276) runs cycling tours.

Swimming

There are 25m and 50m heated indoor swimming pools at the **Canberra International Sports & Aquatics Centre** (Map p266; ☎ 6251 7888; www.clubgroup.com.au/home; 100 Eastern Valley Way, Bruce; adult/child \$4.80/3.50; 🕒 6am-9pm Mon-Fri, 7am-7pm Sat & Sun).

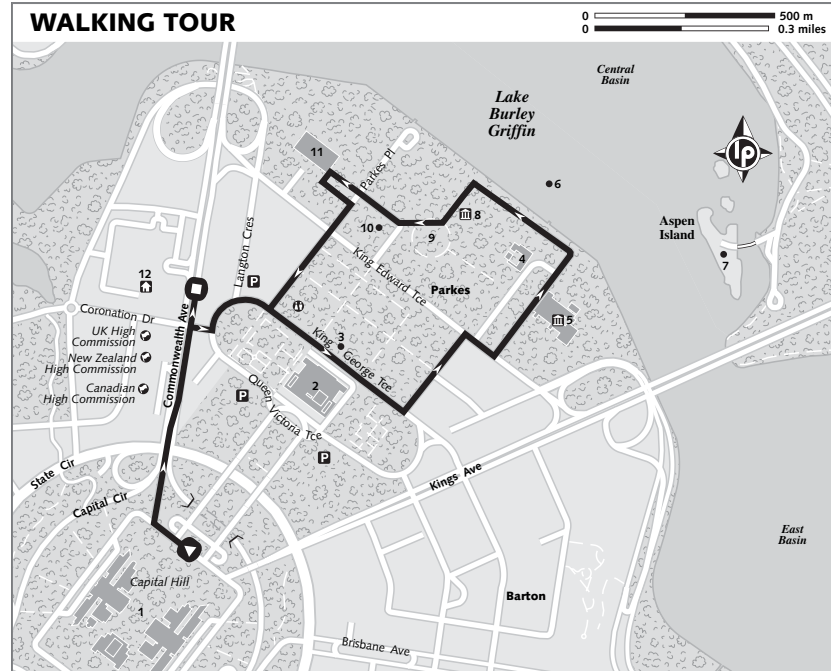
You can also have a splash at the **Canberra Olympic Pool** (Map p268; ☎ 6248 6799; Allara St, Civic; adult/child \$4.70/3; 🕒 6am-8.30pm Mon-Thu, to 7.50pm Fri, 7am-6pm Sat, 8am-6pm Sun) and the National Trust-listed 75-year-old **Manuka Swimming Pool** (Map p268; ☎ 6295 1349; Manuka Oval, Manuka; adult/child \$4/3; 🕒 6.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 8am-7pm Sat & Sun Nov-Mar, usually closed Apr-Oct).

See Murrumbidgee River Corridor (p284) for more on inviting waterholes around the city.

WALKING TOUR

Canberra is widely spread, but many of its major attractions are in or near the parliamentary triangle defined by Lake Burley Griffin, Commonwealth Ave and Kings Ave.

The focus of the triangle is **Parliament House** (1; p271) on Capital Hill. Heading north from here along Commonwealth Ave towards the lake, you'll pass the New Zealand, Canadian and UK **high commissions** on your



WALK FACTS

Start/Finish Capital Hill

Distance 6km

Duration 2-3 hours

left. Turn right (east) at Coronation Dr to King George Tce and **Old Parliament House** (2; p271), which houses the **National Portrait Gallery**. Opposite the main entrance to Old Parliament House is the **Aboriginal Tent Embassy** (3 p272).

Head southeast along King George Tce and turn left at Parkes Pl, across King Edward Tce, to the grand **High Court of Australia** (4; p273), with its ornamental watercourse burbling alongside the path to the entrance. Next door, across Parkes Pl, is the wonderful **National Gallery of Australia** (5; p270), where you can imbibe caffeine as well as culture.

Follow Parkes Pl down to shores of **Lake Burley Griffin** (6; p270) where you'll see and perhaps hear the **National Carillon** (7; p270) on Aspen Island. Turn left towards Commonwealth Place where you can examine famous

heads at the annexe of the **National Portrait Gallery** (8; p271) and explore indigenous issues through art at nearby **Reconciliation Place** (9; p270).

Cross diagonally (northwest) over the lawns to **Questacon** (10; p272), Canberra's interactive science museum. From here you should cross the Parkes Pl (northwest) to arrive at the **National Library of Australia** (11; p273). Head back up Parkes Pl to Coronation Dr, crossing the busy Commonwealth Ave and heading north to the Art Nouveau classic **Hyatt Hotel Canberra** (12; p278) for a well earned refreshment.

CANBERRA FOR CHILDREN

The hyperactive demands of children are easily met in Canberra. There's lots of free stuff and outdoor activities; but beware, some of the big-ticket attractions have big-ticket prices and strategically placed souvenir shops. Also watch out for the family-ticket small print where more than two kids is considered a rort.

The visitors centre has the *Kidfriendly* brochure (www.kidfriendly.com.au), a *Parks*

& *Playgrounds* leaflet, and a map of skate parks.

For fresh air and exercise, stroll through the lovely **Australian National Botanic Gardens** (p271). Take demanding budding Attenboroughs to the tooth and claw distractions of the **National Zoo & Aquarium** (p272). Or drape them in a python at the **Australian Reptile Centre** (p285). The littlest littles will appreciate a spin on Civic's landmark **merry-go-round** (🎡) 10am-4pm Mon-Thu, 10am-7pm Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun).

Energy levels can also be accommodated by swimming at a **pool** or **waterhole** (p274), or by hiring **bikes** (p274).

For hands-on scientific fun, visit **Questacon** (p272), the interactive science museum. Another place with a child-friendly scientific bent is **CSIRO Discovery** (p274).

Miniature steam-train rides can be taken at **Cockington Green Gardens** (p285). And there is a plethora of museums custom-built for active imaginations, including the **National Dinosaur Museum** (p285) and the brilliant **National Museum of Australia** (p270).

TOURS

Aquila Helicopters (☎ 0412-066 766; www.aquila-helicopters.com.au; Canberra International Airport; flights from \$70) For aerial views.

Balloon Aloft (☎ 6285 1540; www.balloon.canberra.net.au; rides from adult/child \$230/160) For quieter aerial views.

Brindabella Bike Tours (☎ 6242 6276, 0407-426 276; www.brindabellabiketours.com; half/full day tours \$55/95) Bikes, equipment & refreshments provided. Half-day Canberra sightseeing or full-day wilderness touring. Complimentary pick-up & drop-off.

Canberra Day Tours (☎ 0418-455 099; www.canberra-daytours.com.au) Shuttles you around various capital sites all day for adult/child \$40/35, including entry fees. This hop-on hop-off service is called the Red Explorer bus and there are five services kicking off from the Melbourne Building, Northbourne Ave. The first service leaves at 9.30am, the last at 3pm. Check the website or pick up a brochure at the visitors centre for a timetable.

Go Bush Tours (☎ 6231 3023; www.gobushtours.com.au) Reputable tailored excursions around Canberra, including a circuit of city lookouts (adult/concession from \$40/35) and a day-long exploration of Namadji National Park (adult/concession \$120/80). It has a wheelchair-accessible vehicle.

Southern Cross Yacht Club (Map p268; ☎ 6273 1784; www.sccc.com.au; 1 Mariner Pl, Yarralumla; adult/child \$15/9) Provides a sightseeing cruise aboard the MV Southern Cross departing 3pm daily.

SS Maid Marion (☎ 0418-828 357; adult/child \$12/5) Operates one-hour cruises that pick-up/drop-off at lakeside locales such as Regatta Point ferry terminal, the National Library and the National Museum.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

January

Summernats Car Festival (www.summernats.com.au) Revs up over three days in January at Exhibition Park.

Australia Day Live (www.austaliadaylive.gov.au) The annual 25 January live concert on the lawns of Federal Parliament featuring the hottest names in Australian music.

February

National Multicultural Festival (www.multicultural-festival.com.au) Celebrated over 10 days in February.

Royal Canberra Show (www.mcas.org.au/showwebsite/main.html) The country meets the city at the end of February.

March-April

Celebrate Canberra (www.celebratecanberra.com)

The city's extended birthday party, with a day-long food, drinks and arts festival.

National Folk Festival (www.folkfestival.asn.au) One of the country's largest folk festivals.

Anzac Day National holiday held on April 25, commemorating the armed services. Dawn services and marches held at the Australian War Memorial.

June

National Capital DanceSport Championships

Competition ballroom dancing at its glitziest best.

September-November

Canberra International Film Festival (www.canberra-filmfestival.com.au) A 10-day international film festival held in October/November.

Floriade (www.floriadeaustralia.com) Held in September/October and dedicated to Canberra's spectacular spring flowers.

SCOTT (www.scott24hr.com.au) Largest mountain bike race in the southern hemisphere, held over two days in early-to-mid-October.

Stonefest (www.stonefest.com.au) Big-time two-day music festival staged at the end of October at the University of Canberra.

SLEEPING

Most hotels and motels are strung along Northbourne Ave or hidden in northern suburbs like Ainslie, Braddon, O'Connor and Downer. The other main accommodation area lies south around Capital Hill, particularly in the politician-favoured domains of Kingston

and Barton. When parliament is sitting it pays to book ahead.

Most places can supply cots and a room or two suitable for a family-sized stay. Travellers with limited mobility will find that few places outside top-end accommodation have true barrier-free rooms.

Budget

HOTELS

Canberra YHA Hostel (Map p268; ☎ 6248 9155; www.yha.com.au; 7 Akuna St, Civic; dm \$24-27, d/f \$70/100; 🚻 🚿 📺) This bright, well-run hostel has an impressive list of services including a pool, 24-hour reception, a bar and self-catering kitchen and cable TV. It remains fond of backpackers, but has all the facilities (except parking) to attract families seeking central, reasonably priced rooms.

Victor Lodge (Map p268; ☎ 6295 7777; www.victorlodge.com.au; 29 Dawes St, Kingston; dm/s \$27/59, d & tw \$76; 📺 🚿) This is a good option if you need to park a vehicle and it is very handy to the Kingston cafés and shops. The rooms are compact and the bathrooms shared. There's linen provided, use of a commercial kitchen, a BBQ area, filling breakfasts and bicycle hire, plus a helping hand if you need info on local attractions. They'll pick you up from Jolimont or the train station if need be; otherwise catch bus 38, 39 or 80 from Civic.

HOTELS

Kingston Hotel (Map p268; ☎ 6295 0123; 73 Canberra Ave, Griffith; dm \$20, bed linen \$5; 📺) The Kingston is a blue-collar pub with very basic pub rooms (each with a double bunk and shared bathrooms. It's a noisy and lively venue where you can throw a steak on the grill in the bistro, wrestle a poker machine or join the crowd at the bar.

City Walk Hotel (Map p268; ☎ 1800 600 124, 6257 0124; www.citywalkhotel.com.au; 2 Mort St, Civic; dm \$28, s \$55-85, d \$70-95, f \$110) This five-storey budget hotel is smack in the middle of Civic and the compact rooms are in pretty good shape thanks to the smoking ban. The more expensive rooms have private bathrooms.

HALLS OF RESIDENCE

Some of the ANU's pleasant halls of residence rent out rooms from late November to late February during university holidays. Most offer similar facilities and room prices start from around \$50 (up to \$15 more for B&B).

Bruce Hall (Map p268; ☎ 6267 4000) and **Burton & Garran Hall** (Map p268; ☎ 6267 4333) are at the northern end of Daley Rd. The affiliated **Ursula College** (Map p268; ☎ 6279 4303) and **John XXIII College** (Map p268; ☎ 6279 4905) lie opposite Sullivans Creek. Civic is a brisk 15-minute walk across campus.

CAMPING & CARAVAN PARKS

Canberra Motor Village (Map p266; ☎ 6247 5466; canmotorvillage@ozemail.com.au; Kunzea St, O'Connor; unpowered site \$16-22, powered site \$30, d \$65-132; 📺 🚻) Attractively positioned in a peaceful, bush hillside setting 6km northwest of Civic, this place has an abundance of amenities, motel rooms and self-contained cabins in various sizes. Note no pets allowed.

Canberra Carotel (Map p266; ☎ 6241 1377; info@carotel.com.au; Federal Hwy, Watson; unpowered site \$18, powered site \$24, d \$65-180; 📺 🚻 🚿) This is a large caravan park and motel complex on the northern outskirts of town. The complex looks a little ordinary on its 22 acres with not enough trees, but the reception/shop is friendly and the cabins are good value, especially for larger families and groups.

Eaglehawk Holiday Park (☎ 6241 6411; www.eaglehawk.contact.com.au; Federal Hwy, Sutton; camp/caravan site \$18/25, s & d \$80-135, f \$90-145; 📺 🚻) This friendly highwayside complex is only 12km north of the centre, just over the NSW border. It has plenty of sheltered midrange accommodation and recreation facilities and is pet friendly. Meals are available at the pub next door.

Midrange

The Canberra Visitors Centre (p269) can often provide a midrange or top-end room cheaper than standby rates and the rack rates mentioned here.

Blue & White Lodge (Map p266; ☎ 6248 0498; blueandwhitelodge@bigpond.com; 524 Northbourne Ave, Downer; s \$55-88, d \$90-95, f \$110-130; 📺 🚻) The Grecian pillars and the name hint at the friendly Mediterranean reception and squeaky clean accommodation that greets guests at this recommended B&B. The comfortable rooms, some with shared bathrooms, are neat as a pin and come with a delicious cooked breakfast (or you can also elect for a room-only rate). The owners of this lodge also manage the **Canberran Lodge** (Map p266; 528 Northbourne Ave, Downer; 📺 🚻) a similarly styled place, where all the rooms are en suite, just two doors down. Make inquiries at the Blue & White

Lodge where you will also find your breakfast dining room.

Northbourne Lodge (Map p266; ☎ 6257 2599; 522 Northbourne Ave, Downer; s/d \$70/90; P ♿) This stylish, adobe-washed B&B provides good-value, accommodation with private bathrooms, and a choice of breakfast (\$10) – English, Continental or Asian. The owner has a wealth of ideas for what to do in Canberra.

our pick **University House** (☎ 6125 5211; www.anu.edu.au/unihouse; 1 Balmain Cres, Acton; s \$75-130, d \$125-80; P) This 1950s-era building, with furniture to match, resides in the bushy grounds of ANU. The spacious rooms can be hired with or without breakfast and come with a small balcony from where you can watch attendees of academic conferences come and go. There's also a pleasant courtyard in which to let your thoughts wander, and a good selection of wine in the cellar bottle shop.

Rydges Eagle Hawk Resort (☎ 1800 651 543, 6241 6033; www.rydges.com/eaglehawk; Federal Hwy, Sutton; s & d from \$100, f \$145; P ♿) This well-appointed conference facility is just over the border in NSW, about 10km from the city. It boasts an expansive block of bushland, a pool and tennis courts, and welcomes families.

Tall Trees Motel (Map p266; ☎ 6247 9200; www.bestwestern.com.au/talltrees; 21 Stephen St, Ainslie; d \$100-25; P ♿) The trees are tall and the quiet, leafy gardens help make this a good choice for light sleepers. The rooms are spacious, have garden outlooks and yet you are still only minutes from the city.

Miranda Lodge (☎ 6249 8038; www.mirandalodge.com.au; 534 Northbourne Ave, Downer; s/d \$100/120; P ♿) This motel-style lodge has clean-cut rooms in a variety of sizes and slams a full cooked breakfast under your bleary morning eyes. The owners of Miranda Lodge also run the equally priced **Parkview Lodge** (526 Northbourne Ave, Downer; P ♿) nearby; direct inquiries to Miranda Lodge.

Motel Monaro (Map p268; ☎ 6295 2111; www.bestwestern.com.au/motelmonaro; 27 Dawes St, Kingston; s/d from \$105/116; P ♿) This well-maintained motel is on a quiet street a short stroll from the coffee-scented Kingston shopping centre. It is run by the same convivial folk who manage **Victor Lodge** (p277) next door. It has a couple of large rooms that are ideal for groups. Book ahead when parliament is sitting.

Olims Hotel Canberra (Map p268; ☎ 1800 475 337, 6243 0000; www.olimshotel.com; cnr Ainslie & Limestone Aves, Braddon; d \$105-45; P ♿) This 1927 National

Trust heritage-listed building and its later refurbishments look a little worse for wear on the outside but the well-appointed rooms surround a nice, terraced courtyard garden. There are standard rooms, superior rooms and 1st-floor, self-contained 'loft' rooms with balconies looking over the inner garden. The rooms where smoking is allowed, with their sealed corridors, are a gas chamber for non-smokers.

The Pavilion (Map p266; ☎ 1800 828 000, 6247 6888; www.pavilioncanberra.com; 242 Northbourne Ave, Dickson; d/apr from \$150/200; P ♿) The atrium garden of this centrally located, midrange hotel is a nice touch – the radioactive-green carpet running around its edge isn't. The Pavilion is thick with the flavour of a large chain hotel, but it offers decent-value apartments and is a good stopover for fussy travellers. Some rooms are wheelchair accessible.

Top End

Novotel (Map p268; ☎ 1300 656 565, 6245 5000; www.novotelcanberra.com.au; 65 Northbourne Ave, Civic; s & d \$150-410; P ♿) The 197-room Novotel occupies prime central real estate just a few minutes' stroll from restaurants and shops. The four-star mod-cons include in-room data points, a business centre, spa, gym and a pool. They've thought of pretty much everything, down to the daily weather reports posted in the lifts.

Pacific International Apartments – Capital Tower (Map p268; ☎ 1800 224 584, 6276 3444; www.pacifichotels.com; 2 Marcus Clarke St, Civic; apt from \$155; P ♿) Rooms on the southern side of this apartment complex face the soporific waters of Lake Burley Griffin and attract a slightly higher tariff than city-side rooms. The majority of apartments have two or three bedrooms and can fit up to six people.

Hyatt Hotel Canberra (Map p268; ☎ 6270 1234; www.canberra.park.hyatt.com; Commonwealth Ave, Yarralumla; r from \$325; P ♿) This beautifully restored, luxurious, Art Deco hotel boasts an impressive spa, gym and pool, a cigar bar, restaurant, tea lounge and round-the-clock room service, making it Canberra's only five-star accommodation. Try for a room with a view of the lake, and ask about the various B&B packages.

EATING

Canberrans fork in food and fork out cash at several hundred diverse eateries. Civic is

a dining hub, with raised menu standards to compete with upmarket selections in Kingston, Manuka and Griffith. There's also a fantastic Asian strip in Dickson and a growing trend of excellent options throughout the suburbs.

On Monday and Sunday nights tumbleweeds roll through town and it can be hard to find a restaurant that's open.

Civic

Within and around Civic you'll find everything from burger joints to no-fuss Italian restaurants and trendy Asian eateries.

Asian Café (Map p268; ☎ 6262 6233; 32 West Row; mains \$9-20; ☎ lunch & dinner) Chinese and Malaysian standards such as roast duck and laksa are professionally dished out in this busy and brightly coloured café. Takeaway is available if you just can't sit still.

la pasa (Map p268; ☎ 6248 6288; Shop 1 Alinga St; mains \$11-17; ☎ lunch & dinner) This Singaporean beauty woks up superb Malaysian meals including a variety of fiery laksas, chilli prawns, and beef *rendang*. There are several vegetarian options and good-value boxed lunches for \$7.

Caffè della Piazza (Map p268; ☎ 6248 9711; 19 Garema Pl; mains \$14-22; ☎ lunch & dinner) With plenty of outdoor seating, a heady and sizeable wine list, and generous serves of traditional pasta this Italian institution attracts an appreciative crowd. It's been dishing up the goods for many years and has the dining-out formula down pat.

Lemon Grass (Map p268; ☎ 6247 2779; 65 London Circuit; mains \$14-18; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) Situated in the delightful Melbourne Building, this dependable Thai institution offers a long list of vegetarian, stir-fry, curry and seafood dishes. If you're a fan of king prawns order the *goong gratiam* with pepper and steamed vegetables.

Tosolini's (Map p268; ☎ 6247 4317; cnr London Circuit & East Row; mains \$15-28; lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) Tosolini's has predominantly rich, meaty meals, such as the venison pie with winter vegetables, though the menu changes with the seasons and there are several salads and a few vegetarian options available.

Courgette (Map p268; ☎ 6247 4042; 54 Marcus Clarke St, Civic; mains \$23-32; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat) This fine-dining establishment may be named after a vegetable (the humble zucchini), but meat gets top billing here, from pan-seared calf liver to wonderful prawn ravioli. Frequented by an older clientele, this

restaurant is earnest but low-key, and offers a splendid assortment of mature wines by the glass or bottle.

Fast food is on the menu at the Canberra Centre's **food hall** (Map p268; Bunda St; meals \$6-12), including sushi, kebabs, burgers, laksa, gourmet rolls and smoothies.

Manuka

Southeast of Capital Hill is the multi-cuisine culture of Manuka shopping centre, an up-market hub for diplomats and other suits. Try French, Spanish, Turkish, Italian, Lebanese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, and more, in the local eateries.

Ruchi (Map p268; ☎ 6295 7122; Style Arcade, Franklin St; mains \$7-15; ☎ lunch Tue-Fri & Sun, dinner Tue-Sat) Ruchi specialises in South Indian cuisine and has a comprehensive menu of veg and non-veg dishes from Goan vindaloo and Keralan fish curries to lamb Madras. Bring a group of friends and take an inexpensive epicurean excursion of the other Deep South. There's a popular lunch buffet on Sunday (\$16.50).

My Café (Map p268; ☎ 6295 6632; Franklin St; mains \$10-20; ☎ breakfast, lunch & dinner) This small licensed café serving bruschetta, bagels and burgers attracts a breakfast crowd keen to bring their office wherever they go. With sunny sidewalk tables it is also popular for lingering lunches and espresso junkies throughout the day.

Alanya (Map p268; ☎ 6295 9678; Style Arcade, Franklin St; mains \$15-25; ☎ lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) This long-standing, award-winning Turkish restaurant has been feeding its fans authentic delights for over 20 years. There are plenty of banquet options (including vegetarian choices) and stand-alone mains like the excellent *hünkar beğendi* (diced lamb on a bed of eggplant).

Mecca Bah (Map p268; ☎ 6260 6700; 25-29 Manuka Tce; mains \$15-20; ☎ lunch & dinner) Satisfy a big hunger with the dips and bread, tagine, grills and wood-fired Turkish pizzas of this stylish Middle-Eastern restaurant.

Legends (Map p268; ☎ 6295 3966; Franklin St; mains \$20-30; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) This lively Spanish restaurant is upstairs in the Capital Cinema Centre. House specialties include paella (a vegetarian version is available) and *bacalao* (dried salted cod), and there are lots of delicious tapas (from \$9) to nibble. There's also the odd bit of live flamenco guitar most nights.

Kingston

Kingston's cafés, bars and restaurants surround the leafy Green Square and continue right around the perimeter of the shopping centre.

our pick Cipriani (Map p268; ☎ 6295 0777; 27 Kennedy St; mains \$11-28; ☺ lunch & dinner) The casual elegance, attentive service, smooth lines and warm Tuscan tones only hint at the dining delight that is Cipriani. Specialities include homemade sausages, such as the delicious chicken, rocket and ricotta *salsicce*, and the traditional Italian pork sausage served with a roasted capsicum relish or creamy mashed potato. There's also a mouth-watering range of pizzas and an extensive wine list with quality wines available by the glass.

Silo (Map p268; ☎ 6260 6060; 36 Giles St; mains \$14-20; ☺ breakfast & lunch Tue-Sat) This accomplished bakery-café can be standing room only during the breakfast and lunch rushes. Besides a fine range of breads and breakfast standards like eggs Florentine, it offers gourmet pizzas and exquisite flans and tarts.

First Floor (Map p268; ☎ 6260 6311; Green Sq; mains \$18-30; ☺ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) Overlooking Green Sq is this fine-dining, minimalist décor establishment, where the seasonal Mod Oz menus run the gamut from fish and chips to stir-fries and pasta. The desserts are truly decadent and you can sip wines from around Australia.

Santa Lucia (Map p268; ☎ 6295 1813; 21 Kennedy St; mains \$20-5; ☺ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat) Canberra's first Italian restaurant is three decades old and still going strong. Generous pasta dishes with rich sauces are delivered to the patent red-and-white-checked tablecloths, and there are kid's meals for \$10 to \$12.

Dickson

Dickson's eclectic shopping precinct is dominated by an Asian smorgasbord where Chinese, Thai, Laotian, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Indian, Turkish and Malaysian restaurants compete with such odd bedfellows as McDonald's and an Irish pub.

Fekerte's Ethiopian Cuisine (Map p266; ☎ 6262 5799; 2 Cape St; mains \$18; ☺ lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Tue-Sat) This African gem weaves culinary magic with authentic Ethiopian cuisine along the lines of thick stews, spicy curries and moreish *injera* (Ethiopian flat bread). It's like comfort food, only far more interesting and from another continent.

Sfoglìa (Map p266; ☎ 6262 5538; 57 Woolley St; mains \$6-12; ☺ breakfast & lunch) A delightful patisserie and café where you'll find a hearty cooked breakfast and strong coffee to kickstart your day or a healthy focaccia to give you a lunch-time boost.

Àu Lac (Map p266; ☎ 6262 8922; 39 Woolley St; mains \$9-12; ☺ lunch Tue-Sun, dinner daily) This simple Vietnamese vegetarian restaurant employs soya bean as a culinary chameleon, making it pretend to be a beef curry, fried fish or honey-roast chicken. The meals are tasty and the service is quick, and there's a value lunch box special for \$7.

Kingland Vegetarian Restaurant (Map p266; ☎ 6262 9350; Shop 5, Dickson Shopping Centre; mains \$8-15; ☺ lunch & dinner Wed-Sun, dinner Sat) Another popular vegetarian restaurant where the Asian dishes make use of soy substitute to look like various meats. It is located off Woolley St.

Dickson Asian Noodle House (Map p266; ☎ 6247 6380; 29 Woolley St; mains \$11-14; ☺ lunch & dinner) This perennially popular Laotian and Thai café is usually booked up towards the end of the week, though thankfully there's always take-away. Within minutes of ordering, eat your fill of wok-fried, *Hokkien*-style or soup-laden noodles. Pick of the menu is the addictive combination laksa.

Around Canberra

Bernadette's Café & Restaurant (Map p266; ☎ 6248 5018; Wakefield Gardens, Ainslie; mains \$8-17; ☺ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) This is a soothingly simple, uncluttered eatery preparing healthy vegetarian burgers, focaccias and soups, plus salads embellished with quail eggs and roast yam. Desserts are locked safely away from prying fingers in a glass-fronted strong box.

Green Herring Restaurant (Map p266; ☎ 6230 2657; Ginninderra Village, O'Hanlon Pl, Nicholls; mains \$27; ☺ lunch Fri-Sun, dinner Tue-Sat) This place offers rustic cosiness in a 120-yr old slab hut. Don't be put off by the name – it serves Mod Oz with creative flourishes, exceptional desserts, and has a separate vegetarian menu. Also available:

Café in the House (Map p268; ☎ 6270 8156; Old Parliament House, King George Tce, Parkes; mains \$10-25; ☺ lunch Sun-Mon & dinner Fri) Enjoy white linen service in the delightful surrounds of Old Parliament House (p271).

Meeting Place (Map p266; ☎ 6230 2657; Kamberra Wine Company, cnr Northbourne Ave & Flemington Rd, Lyneham; mains \$25-30; ☺ lunch Sun-Sat & dinner Thu-Sat) A delightful lunch spot in the well-tended grounds of the winery.

DRINKING

Pubs and bars are mostly concentrated in Civic, but some good establishments have also set themselves up in the northern suburbs of Dickson and O'Connor, and across the lake in Kingston.

Wig & Pen (Map p268; ☎ 6248 0171; cnr Alinga St & West Row, Civic) This little brewery and pub has its two-room interior packed out on Friday nights by thirsty office workers who also enjoy the hearty pub meals (\$10 to \$12). It produces several styles of beer, including real English ale.

The Phoenix (Map p268; ☎ 6247 1606; 21 East Row, Civic) Regulars don't think twice about coming back to this pub after rising from the ashes of the night before, and we love it too. It's a staunch supporter of new local musos, and has a mellow atmosphere, rustic decorations and armchairs that incline you towards pondering life for the night.

Knightsbridge Penthouse (Map p268; ☎ 6262 6221; 34 Mort St, Braddon) It's about as chic as Canberra gets – which is surprisingly chic. This opulent den of a bar is cleverly illuminated by optic fibres, and serves dishy cocktails to dishy folk. It's New Orleans Gothic meets Bret Easton Ellis.

Belgian Beer Cafe (Map p268; ☎ 6260 6511; 29 Jardine St, Kingston) With 33 bottled Belgian beers and five on tap, such as the ever popular Stella Artois, this is the place to quench a thirst and educate a palate.

Kremlin (Map p268; ☎ 6257 7779; 61 Northbourne Ave, Civic) This ultra cool but friendly bar soothes the soul with occasional live strings, a breathable atmosphere and subdued lighting.

Trinity Bar (Map p266; ☎ 6262 5010; 28 Challis St, Dickson) Sleek, DJ-equipped Trinity has fine vodka, martinis and cocktails to sample, plus beer pulled from ceiling-hung taps. Look for the deep-red lighting and the tri-stripe symbol on the wall – they're the only signs directing strangers to this out-of-the-way haunt.

All Bar Nun (Map p266; ☎ 6257 9191; MacPherson St, O'Connor) This popular bar, languishing comfortably in suburbia, has a diminutive interior tailor-made for crowded carousing, and tables appealingly sprawled all over the sidewalk. It also has a decent selection of snacks and light meals.

Hippo Bar (Map p268; ☎ 6257 9090; 17 Garema Pl, Civic) Chilled-out Hippo is indeed hip and appropriately cosy for a lounge-bar. The red poufs are accosted by a young crowd of

cocktail slurpers who file in for Wednesday-night jazz.

For a Guinness and Irish theme schmaltz head to **PJ O'Reilly's** (Map p268; ☎ 6230 4752; Melbourne Bldg, cnr Alinga St & West Row, Civic), endearingly referred to by the locals as Plastic McPaddy's, the **Durham Castle Arms** (Map p268; ☎ 6295 1769; Green Sq, Kingston), a cosy village pub wannabe in the middle of café-filled Kingston, or **Filthy McFadden's** (Map p268; ☎ 6239 5303; 62 Jardine St, Kingston), right next door.

ENTERTAINMENT

Canberra has always been curiously good at nurturing its music talent, and they pop up around town. You'll find entertainment listings in Thursday's *Canberra Times* and in the free monthly street mag *bma*. **Ticketek** (Map p268; ☎ 6219 6666; www.ticketek.com.au; Akuna St, Civic) sells tickets to all major events.

Nightclubs

icbm & Meche (Map p268; ☎ 6248 0102; 50 Northbourne Ave, Civic; Meche Sat, \$10-12; ☺ icbm 7pm-late, Meche 12-3am Wed-Sat) Young drinking crowds attend this clubbing complex, with the music-blasted bar icbm downstairs and the dancehall Meche upstairs. Hosting the odd international DJ the complex diversifies with Wednesday comedy nights.

Club Mombasa (Map p268; ☎ 0419 609 106; www.clubmombasa.com.au; 128 Bunda St, Civic; events \$5-10; ☺ 8pm-late Wed-Sun) The energetic patrons of Club Mombasa spend their evenings counting the beat to African and Latin rhythms, reggae, hip-hop, funk and drum 'n' bass.

Cinemas

Dendy Canberra Centre (Map p268; ☎ 6221 8900; www.dendy.com.au; Level 2, Canberra Centre, 148 Bunda St, Civic) Canberra's newest cinemas is also the last bastion for independent and art-house cinema in the city. Tuesday is discount day.

Greater Union (Map p268; ☎ 6247 5522; www.greaterunion.com.au; 6 Mort St, Civic; adult/child \$15/11) This venue screens mainstream releases. Other multiplex cinemas can be found within Canberra's various suburban shopping malls.

Theatre

Canberra Theatre Centre (Map p268; ☎ box office 1800 802 025, 6275 2700; www.canberratheatre.org.au; Civic Sq, London Circuit, Civic; ☺ box office 9am-5.30pm Mon-Sat) This centre is the hub of live theatre in Canberra and the dramatic goings-on range from

Shakespeare to Circus Oz and indigenous dance troupes. Information and tickets are supplied by Canberra Ticketing, in the adjacent North Building.

Gorman House Arts Centre (Map p268; ☎ 6249 7377; www.gormanhouse.com.au; Ainslie Ave, Braddon) This arts centre hosts various theatre and dance companies that regularly stage their own self-hatched productions, including the innovative moves of the **Australian Choreographic Centre** (☎ 6247 3103).

Live Music

Many pubs have free live music.

Tilley's Devine Cafe Gallery (Map p266; ☎ 6249 1543; www.tilleys.com.au; cnr Wattle & Brigalow Sts, Lyneham; admission \$20-40; ♿ shows from 9pm) People of all ages breeze in and out of Tilley's cool, clean-air interior, with its scuffed furniture, dark booths and eclectic menu of local and international musicians and comedians. It also does poetry nights, writers sessions and great cooked breakfasts.

ANU Union Bar (Map p268; ☎ 6125 2446; www.anuunion.com.au; Union Court, Acton; admission \$5-20; ♿ gigs from 8pm) A mainstay of Canberra's music scene, the Uni Bar has energetic live music bouncing off its walls and into the ears of sozzled students up to three times a week during the semester. Significant student discounts usually apply to gigs. It's also a good place for a game of pool and a drink.

Toast (Map p268; ☎ 6230 0003; City Walk, Civic; admission \$5-10) Diversity reigns supreme at this gritty little bar, which has live music (solo acoustic, bands, CD launches) at week's end. Discard any prejudices to brood at the door – everyone and everything goes here.

Hippo Bar (p281) This is another good place for emerging live music, where you can hear jazz and turntable sounds.

Sport

The Canberra Raiders are the home-town rugby league side and during the season (from March to September) they play regularly at **Canberra Stadium** (Map p266; ☎ 6256 6700; www.canberrastadium.com; Battye St, Bruce; ♿). Also laying tackles at Canberra Stadium are the ACT Brumbies rugby union team, who play in the international Super 14 competition (February to May). From October to February, catch the super-successful women's basketball team, the Canberra Capitals, at **Southern Cross Stadium** (☎ tickets 6253 3066; cnr Cowlishaw St & Athlton Dr, Green-

way; ♿); their compatriots, the AIS, play at the **AIS Training Hall** (Map p266; ☎ 6214 1201; Leverrier Cres, Bruce; ♿).

SHOPPING

Clothing shops for all budgets are concentrated in the city centre, but if you want to splash some cash in boutiques head to Manuka Shopping Centre. For multicultural groceries and Asian goods head to Dickson Shopping Centre. Canberra is a crafty city and a good place for picking up creative gifts and souvenirs from galleries, museum shops and markets. For Aboriginal Art see Gold Creek Village (p285).

Canberra Centre (Map p268; ☎ 6247 5611; Bunda St, Civic) The city's biggest shopping centre boasts numerous speciality stores, including fashion boutiques, food emporiums, jewellery shops and several chain stores. The ground-floor information desk can help with wheelchair and stroller hire.

Craft ACT (Map p268; ☎ 6262 9993; www.craftact.org.au; 1st fl, North Bldg, Civic Sq, Civic) It's well worth visiting this venue for the wonderful exhibitions of contemporary work, including cutting-edge designs in the form of bags, bowls, pendants and prints.

Old Bus Depot Markets (Map p268; ☎ 6292 8391; www.obdm.com.au; Wentworth Ave, Kingston; ♿ 10am-4pm Sun) This popular, decade-old indoor market specialises in handcrafted goods and regional edibles, including the output of the Canberra district's 20-plus wineries.

Gorman House Arts Centre Markets (Map p268; ☎ 6249 7377; Gorman House Arts Centre, Ainslie Ave, Braddon; ♿ 10am-4pm Sat) Art, craft, tarot, massages, vintage goods and the odd burst of entertainment liven up the courtyards of this heritage precinct.

Kamberra Wine Company (Map p266; ☎ 6262 2333; www.kamberra.com.au; cnr Northbourne Ave & Flemington Rd, Lyneham; ♿ 10am-5pm) A winery and part-time gallery, this complex showcases the district's fine cool-climate wines and has a café and restaurant for further ingestion treats.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Canberra International Airport (Map p266; ☎ 6275 2236) is serviced by **Qantas** (Map p268; ☎ 13 13 13, TTY 1800 652 660; www.qantas.com.au; Jolimont Centre, Northbourne Ave, Civic) and **Virgin Blue** (☎ 13 67 89; www.virginblue.com.au), with direct flights to Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney.

Brindabella Airlines (☎ 1300 668 824; www.brindabella-airlines.com.au) flies between Canberra, Albury Wodonga and Newcastle.

Bus

The **interstate bus terminal** (Map p268; Northbourne Ave, Civic) is at the **Jolimont Centre**, and has showers, left-luggage lockers, public internet access and free phone lines to the visitor information centre and some budget accommodation. Inside is **Guidedpost Travel** (Map p268; ☎ 6249 6006; 65 Northbourne Ave, Civic), which handles **CountryLink** (www.countrylink.info) train/coach tickets and books seats on most bus services.

Greyhound Australia (☎ 13 14 99; ♿ Jolimont Centre branch 6am-9.30pm) has frequent services to Sydney (\$36, four hours) and also runs to/from Adelaide (\$135, 18 hours) and Melbourne (\$80, nine hours). In winter there are services to Cooma, Jindabyne and Thredbo.

Murrays (Map p268; ☎ 13 22 51; www.murrays.com.au; ♿ Jolimont Centre branch 7am-7pm) has daily express services running to Sydney (adult \$36, 3¼ hours) and also runs to Batemans Bay (\$24, 2½ hours), Narooma (\$36, 4½ hours) and Wollongong (\$31, 3½ hours).

Transborder (☎ 6241 0033; www.transborder.com.au) runs daily to Yass (\$14, 50 minutes). Its 'Alpine-press' service runs to Thredbo (\$65, three hours) via Jindabyne (\$45, 2½ hours) daily.

Car & Motorcycle

The Hume Hwy connects Sydney and Melbourne, passing 50km north of Canberra. The Federal Hwy runs north to connect with the Hume near Goulburn and the Barton Hwy meets the Hume near Yass. To the south, the Monaro Hwy connects Canberra with Cooma.

Rental car prices start at around \$50 a day. Major companies with city-centre offices and desks at the airport include the following:

Avis (Map p268; ☎ 13 63 33, 6249 6088; 17 Lonsdale St, Braddon)

Budget (Map p268; ☎ 1300 362 848, 6257 2200; cnr Mort & Girrahween Sts, Braddon)

Hertz (Map p268; ☎ 13 30 39, 6257 4877; 32 Mort St, Braddon)

Thrifty (Map p268; ☎ 13 61 39, 6247 7422; 29 Lonsdale St, Braddon)

Another option is locally-owned **Rumbles** (Map p266; ☎ 6280 7444; 11 Paragon Mall, Gladstone St, Fyshwick). Its office is usually open only on weekdays (weekends by appointment).

Train

Kingston train station (Wentworth Ave), is the city's rail terminus. You can book trains and connecting buses inside the station at the **CountryLink travel centre** (☎ 13 22 32, 6295 1198; ♿ 6am-5pm Mon-Sat, 10.30am-5.30pm Sun), and **Guidedpost Travel** (see left).

CountryLink trains run to/from Sydney (adult/child \$54/27, four hours, three daily). There's no direct train to Melbourne, but a CountryLink coach to Cootamundra links with the train to Melbourne (adult/child \$102/51, nine hours, one daily); the service leaves Jolimont at 10am. A daily **VLine** (☎ 13 61 96; www.vline.com.au) Canberra Link service involves a train between Melbourne and Albury Wodonga, then a connecting bus to Canberra (\$63, 8½ hours). A longer but more scenic bus/train service to Melbourne is the V/Line Capital Link (\$63, 10½ hours) running every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday via Cooma and the East Gippsland forests to Sale, where you board the Melbourne-bound train. Return trips are run on Monday, Thursday and Saturday.

GETTING AROUND

To/From the Airport

Canberra International Airport is in Pialligo, 8km southeast of the city. Taxi fares to the city average \$20. **Deane's Buses** (☎ 6299 3722) operates the AirLiner bus (\$7, 20 minutes, 11 times daily weekdays), which runs from bay 6 of the **Civic bus interchange**.

Car & Motorcycle

Canberra's road system is as circuitous as a politician's answer to a straight question. That said, the wide and relatively uncluttered main roads make driving easy, even at so-called 'peak-hour' times. A map is essential.

Public Transport

BUS

Canberra's public transport provider is the **ACT Internal Omnibus Network** (Action; ☎ 13 17 10; www.action.act.gov.au). The main bus interchange is along Alinga St, East Row and Mort St. Visit the **information kiosk** (Map p268; East Row, Civic; ♿ 7.15am-5pm) for free route maps and timetables.

You can buy single-trip tickets (adult/concession \$3/1.50), but a better bet for most visitors is to buy a daily ticket (adult/concession \$6.60/3.30). Pre-purchase tickets from Action agents (including the visitors centre and some newsagents) or buy them from the driver.

Action also offers several tourist routes (34, 80, 33 and 40) that service most of Canberra's tourist attractions.

Taxi

Canberra Cabs (☎ 13 22 27) has vehicles with access for wheelchairs. There's a convenient **taxi rank** on Bunda St, outside the Greater Union cinema.

AROUND CANBERRA

For information and maps on attractions around Canberra, including the unspoiled bushland just outside the outer urban limits head to the visitors centre (p269).

SOUTH & WEST OF THE CITY – THE WILD SIDE

Murrumbidgee River Corridor

About 66km of the **Murrumbidgee River** flows through the ACT, and along with major tributaries of the **Molonglo** and **Cotter Rivers**, it provides great riverside picnic locations and swimming spots. Pick up a map and brochure at the Canberra visitors centre (p269) and explore the waters of: **Uriarra Crossing**, 24km northwest of the city, on the Murrumbidgee near its meeting with the Molonglo River; **Casuarina Sands**, 19km west of the city at the meeting of the Cotter and Murrumbidgee Rivers; **Kambah Pool Reserve**, another 14km upstream on the Murrumbidgee; **Cotter Dam**,

23km west of the city on the Cotter River and with a camping ground; **Pine Island** and **Point Hut Crossing**, upstream of Kambah Pool Reserve on the Murrumbidgee; and **Gibraltar Falls**, roughly 45km southwest of the city.

On the banks of the Murrumbidgee, 20km south of Canberra, is the beautiful **Lanyon Homestead** (Map p264; ☎ 6237 5136; Tharwa Dr; adult/concession/family \$7/5/15; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun). Also on-site but in a separate building is the **Nolan Gallery** (Map p264; ☎ 6235 5688; adult/concession/family \$3/2/6; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun), containing paintings by celebrated Australian artist Sidney Nolan, including his famous Ned Kelly art. You can buy a combined ticket (adult/concession/family \$9/7/20) to both homestead and gallery.

Near Tharwa is **Cuppacumbalong** (Map p264; ☎ 6237 5116; Naas Rd; ☎ 11am-5pm Wed-Sun & public holidays), a 1922 homestead and heritage garden reincarnated as a quality Australian craftware studio and gallery.

Space Observatories

The ANU's **Mt Stromlo Observatory** (Map p266; ☎ 6201 7800; www.mso.anu.edu.au; Mt Stromlo Rd, Stromlo; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun) was virtually destroyed by the bushfires of January 2003. All but one of the optical telescopes were completely destroyed and the burnt-out domes make for a rather spooky, sci-fi attraction. Huge optical telescopes are dinosaurs in the space exploration field so they won't be replaced. There's an interesting education centre, a meteorite you can stick a magnet on and a breezy café.

WINERIES OF THE ACT

It's been a slow and steady process but Canberra's wine region is finally attracting worldwide recognition for the cool-climate vinos produced here. In particular the area knocks out wonderful Riesling, Shiraz and Chardonnay.

There are over 30 cellar doors to go knocking on; click onto www.canberrawines.com.au or ask at the visitor centre (p269) for detailed information. Otherwise a good start is:

- **Brindabella Hills Winery** (Map p264; ☎ 02-6230 2583; Woodgrove Cl, Hall; ☎ cellar door 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) This sizeable vineyard has been operating for more than 20 years. Set on a beautiful ridge, it has won awards for its Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Riesling.
- **Clonakilla Wines** (Map p264; ☎ 02-6277 5877; Crisps La, Murrumbateman; ☎ cellar door 11am-5pm) Boutique winery producing a handful of highly sought varieties.
- **Madew** (☎ 02-4848 0026; Federal Hwy, Lake George; ☎ cellar door 10am-5pm Wed-Sun) Perched next to Lake George, Madew is also known for its excellent restaurant, **grapefoodwine** (☎ 02-4848 0165; mains \$20-26; ☎ 10am-5pm Wed-Sun).
- **Pialligo Estate** (Map p266; ☎ 02-6247 6060; 18 Kallaroo Rd, Pialligo; ☎ cellar door 10am-5pm Mon-Sun) Within stumbling distance to Canberra, this winery unfurls over a pleasant estate, with a **café** (☎ 10am-5pm Thu-Sun) serving fabulous slow-cooked mains (\$26) to soak up the vino.

The **Canberra Space Centre** (Map p264; ☎ 6201 7880; www.cdsc.nasa.gov; off Paddy's River Rd; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm) resides in the grounds of the Canberra Deep Space Communication Complex, 40km southwest of the city. Pride of place goes to Deep Space Station 43, a 70m-diameter dish that has communicated with the likes of Voyager 1 and 2, Galileo and various Mars probes. There are displays of spacecraft and deep-space tracking technology, plus a piece of lunar basalt scooped up by Apollo XI in 1969. A theatre continuously screens short films on space exploration.

Tidbinbilla & Namadgi

Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve (Map p264; ☎ 6205 1233; www.environment.act.gov.au; off Paddy's River Rd) is just 45km southwest of the city and is threaded with bushwalking tracks. There are kangaroos and emus and it's a great spot to view platypus and lyrebirds at dusk. Call for information on ranger-guided activities on weekends and school holidays.

Corin Forest (Map p264; ☎ 6235 7333; www.corin.com.au; Corin Rd), roughly 50km southwest of the city, is a mountain recreation facility surrounded by Tidbinbilla Reserve. There's a 1.2km bobsled track and a flying fox, both open year-round; a water-slide in summer; and a 'snowplay' area in winter. See the website for prices and special packages.

Namadgi National Park (Map p264; www.environment.act.gov.au) includes eight peaks higher than 1700m and offers excellent opportunities for bushwalking, mountain biking, fishing, horseback riding and viewing Aboriginal rock art. For more information, visit the **Namadgi Visitor Centre** (☎ 6207 2900; Naas Rd, Tharwa; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4.30pm Sat & Sun), 2km south of the Tharwa township. **Camping** (unpowered sites per person \$3-5) is available at Honeysuckle Creek, Mt Clear and Orroral River; book through the visitor centre.

NORTH & EAST OF THE CITY Gold Creek Village

The attractions at **Gold Creek Village** (Map p266; ☎ 6253 9780; Gold Creek Rd, Barton Hwy, Nicholls; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm) are a combination of colonial

kitsch and genuinely interesting exhibits that will keep the kids occupied.

Little tackers will also ogle at the big bones at the **National Dinosaur Museum** (Map p266; ☎ 6230 2655; www.nationaldinosaurmuseum.com.au; adult/child/family \$9.50/6.50/30; ☎ 10am-5pm).

The **Australian Reptile Centre** (Map p266; ☎ 6253 8533; adult/child/concession/family \$7.50/5/6/26; ☎ 10am-5pm) is a fascinating showcase of reptilian life. Behind glass you can see tree skinks and scrub pythons, plus the world's four deadliest land snakes.

Cockington Green (Map p266; ☎ 6230 2273; www.cockington-green.com.au; adult/child/family \$15/8/40; ☎ 9.30am-5pm) is an immaculately groomed, too-quaint-for-its-own-good English village in miniature, coupled with miniature steam-train rides.

Nearby is the **Aboriginal Dreamings Gallery** (Map p266; ☎ 6230 2922; 19 O'Hanlon Pl, Nicholls) with an excellent selection of Aboriginal artwork that includes didgeridoos and bark paintings.

QUEANBEYAN & BUNGENDORE

The NSW towns of Queanbeyan and Bungendore lie just over the border and are intrinsically linked to the national capital. Queanbeyan is a thriving country town with inexpensive motel accommodation; try the **Mid City Motor Inn** (☎ 02-6297 7366; 215 Crawford St, Queanbeyan; s/d \$64/79; ☎ ☎) if you run out of options in Canberra.

Bungendore is a very attractive village, 35km east of Canberra, which bustles on weekends but sleeps during the week. There are galleries and antique stores aplenty to keep the cardigan crowd amused and bemused, but the highlight would have to be the **Bungendore Wood Works Gallery** (☎ 02-6238 1682; cnr Malbon & Ellendon Sts, Bungendore; s/d \$64/79; ☎ ☎). As well as showcasing superb work crafted from Australian timber there are changing exhibits of contemporary Australian artists.

The best place to stay in the region is the **Old Stone House** (☎ 02-6238 1888; stnhsebb@tpg.com.au; 41 Molonglo St, Bungendore; s/d \$130/190; ☎ ☎) a charismatic 1867 granite-block house offering B&B in four antique-furnished rooms.

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