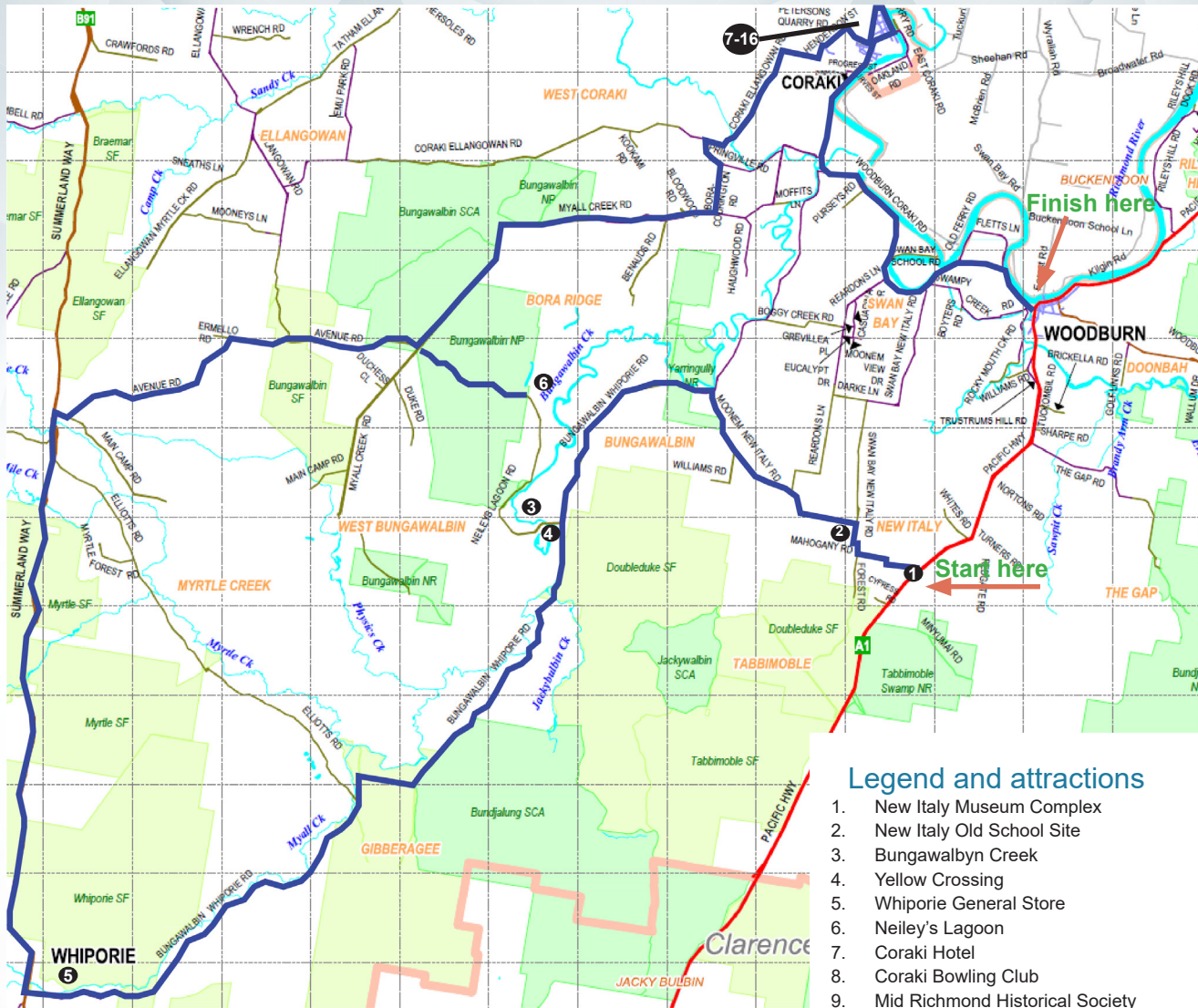


# HISTORICAL WATERWAYS FULL DAY SELF-DRIVE TOUR

- New Italy - Bungawalbin Creek - Neiley's Lagoon - Whiporie - Coraki - 114 kilometres - Full Day Tour



## Legend and attractions

1. New Italy Museum Complex
2. New Italy Old School Site
3. Bungawalbyn Creek
4. Yellow Crossing
5. Whiporie General Store
6. Neiley's Lagoon
7. Coraki Hotel
8. Coraki Bowling Club
9. Mid Richmond Historical Society
10. Coraki Rural Transaction Centre
11. Riverside Park
12. Healing Stones Path
13. Glebe Bridge
14. Coraki Tennis Courts
15. Coraki Rural and Hardware Supplies
16. Coraki Golf Club

**CONTACT US:**  
 p: 6660 0325

e: [tourism@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tourism@richmondvalley.nsw.gov.au)

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Credit is given to the Mid Richmond Historical Society whose research has provided the majority of the historical details in this self-drive tour.

Disclaimer: People undertaking this self-guided tour do so at their own risk. While all efforts to ensure the accuracy of information have been made, the publisher accepts no responsibility for any errors or omissions that may have occurred. Richmond Valley Council will not accept any responsibility for any loss, damage and/or inconvenience to person or property arising from use of this brochure. The location symbols included in this brochure are indicative only. The inclusion of any service, facility or business listed in this brochure is not to be constructed as an endorsement by Richmond Valley Council.



## NEW ITALY (1) (2)

Start your trip at New Italy, just 12 kilometres south of Woodburn on the Pacific Highway. The New Italy Museum Complex is home to the Tastes of New Italy Café and Museum, the Ian O'Driscoll Glass Art Gallery and the Casa Vecchia Gift Shop.

The New Italy Historical Museum (1) and Old School Site at New Italy are reminders of a once thriving Italian community which formally lived in this area. New Italy had its beginnings in 1880 when families of farmers from the region of Vento in Northern Italy set out for the South Pacific, referred to as La Nouvelle France (New France).

The New Italy Old School Site (2) is located on the left hand side at the intersection of Swan Bay Road and Moonem Road. Turn left down Moonem Road, reach Bungawalbin-Whiporie Road and turn left to continue along Bungawalbin Creek.

## BUNGAWALBIN CREEK (3) (4)

The Bungawalbin and Yarringly Parks and Reserves, comprise of Bungawalbin National Park, Bungawalbin Nature Reserve, Bungawalbin State Conservation Area, Yarringly Nature Reserve and Yarringly State Conservation Area.

The reserves are considered one of the most significant areas of fauna biodiversity in north-east NSW, with a high marsupial population, high arboreal mammal distribution and large numbers of threatened species. Bungawalbin Creek (3) is located on the right hand side of the road as you reach Neileys Lagoon Road. A popular local picnic, fishing, canoeing and photography location renowned for its birdlife. It provides 20 kilometres of remote winding waterways before joining the Richmond River. Listed as a natural conservation area, over 130 species of bird, 44 species of mammals and 24 frog species have been identified on the reserve along with endangered and vulnerable plant species.

Yellow Crossing (4), just off Bungawalbin – Whiporie Road is a popular spot for a swim and a picnic and a convenient place to launch a canoe. Pull off the road and on the south eastern side is a driveway down to the water. Pass through Whiporie State Forest on the Bungawalbin – Whiporie Road before reaching Whiporie.

## WHIPORIE (5)

Whiporie is a small village located on the Summerland Way and is home to a small General Store (5) providing delicious food, full and a free camp area. The Summerland Way is a quieter, more scenic route for motorists travelling to south east Queensland, a great alternative to the Pacific Highway. Proceed north along the Summerland Way, turning right onto Main Camp Road and then veer left onto Avenue Road and continue onto Neiley's Lagoon.

## NEILEY'S LAGOON (6)

Continue east along Avenue Road and at the intersection of Myall Creek Road and Neiley's Lagoon Road, turn into Neiley's Lagoon Road. You will see a side road off to the left closed off by a beam pole. Park your car and take the easy walk 1.2 kilometres to Neiley's Lagoon.

Neiley's Lagoon (6) is secluded by beautiful bushland and alive with native wildlife. Enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the picturesque lagoon, listen to the sounds of forest and take the opportunity to relax. Hundreds of years ago Neiley's Lagoon was used by the Bundjalung people as a short-cut as opposed to travelling across the densely vegetated bushland. Return to Myall Creek Road the same way you came in and at the intersection turn left on Woodburn-Coraki Road until you reach the village of Coraki.

## CORAKI (7)- (16)

Coraki is a peaceful and quaint village situated on the junction of the Richmond and Wilson Rivers. Once a bustling industrial centre, Coraki was the busiest inland port on the Richmond River. During 1860s – 1900s, the town earned the nickname 'the hub' due to its proximity to the river junction and importance to the area for its economic advantage before road and rail services were available. The river was the life blood, providing transport and leisure activities. Early township sites were found by observing Aboriginal habitation, generally found to be free of flood inundation in an area where frequent flooding occurred. Aboriginal elders tell of how their people were buried in graves just deep enough to cover their bodies and were buried sitting in an upright position facing east. The totem of the local Bundjalung people is the swamp turtle. Local Aboriginal people will not eat them, always protecting them.

Walk down Coraki's main street, Richmond Terrace, and imagine the area before the 20th century. This was the boom period for Coraki and as a result, many new and grand buildings were erected. It is no wonder the community thrived, having a population the third of the size of Sydney's. Four main wharfs existed along the riverfront in Coraki: Coraki Wharf near the Bowling Club, Edmonton's Wharf, Livestock Wharf near the Coraki Hotel (7) and Government Wharf. Government Wharf was used by the North Coast Steam Navigation Company. In its day this company was the largest shipping company in New South Wales. Their shipbuilding trade was both a national and international business.

Another successful industry operating along the river was the dairy industry. By the end of the 19th century, the dairy industry in Coraki had entered the global market, aided by improved technology, and the production of ice. The Coraki Centre Butter Factory opened its complex on the site now occupied by the Coraki Bowling Club (8). The Butter Factory produced 2 million pounds of butter per year, with a single churn capable of producing 300 pounds of butter.

The last cream boat in Australia was owned and operated by John Smith and John Roberts, both of Coraki. The boat was named Sunshine II, measure 40 foot long and had a capacity of 250 cans which were collected from 37 suppliers. Road transport forced the end of the cream boat era and in 1973 Sunshine II delivered her last consignment of cream to the Norco factory in Lismore.

The Mid Richmond Historical Society Museum (9) on Adams Street in Coraki is open each Wednesday from 10am – 3pm and Saturday 1pm – 3pm showcasing the history of Coraki and surrounding villages along with the history of the Richmond River and maritime recording collections dating back to 1838. With four rooms and an outdoor shed, the museum provides a comprehensive picture into past village life of this region. Ask about the service the museum offers to retrace your family tree. With more than 200 family files, chances are they will be able to connect you with the past. When the museum is closed, postcards can be purchased at the Rural Transaction Centre (10) on Richmond Terrace.

With a bakery, convenience store, pub, club, cafes and eateries and a caravan park, Coraki offers good old-fashioned country hospitality. Don't miss the Coraki Art Prize held annually at the each of October. It's a great weekend of entertainment, showcasing the work of some of the region's most talented and emerging artists.

Once you have finished exploring the new and old of Coraki, head for the Riverside Park (11) and take a stroll along the picturesque riverfront. While there, walk to the western end of the park, past the playground, to the Healing Stones Pathway (12) installed as a symbol of reconciliation between Aboriginal and European settlers and read the story of the history of the river trade industry in the all-weather picnic shelter.

Water sports have always been a recreational activity on the waterways of Coraki. In the early 1900s regattas attracted thousands of spectators to the district and the area produced many world and Australian water sports champions, including Bob Birmingham, the Australian title holder for ski jumps.

The southern crossing of the Wilson River features Glebe Bridge (13), built in 1905 and heritage listed in 2000 for its significance in its ability to demonstrate the modifications of overseas designs to suit the Australian landscape. Glebe Bridge is of American design and is often photographed and painted by locals.

If you are feeling energetic you may like to have a game of tennis at the Coraki Tennis Courts (14) located on Bridge Street. Pay and collect your equipment and key at Coraki Rural Hardware and Supplies (15) which doubles as a service station on Queen Elizabeth Drive. The Coraki Bowling Club and Coraki Golf Club (16) also offer the opportunity for leisure pursuits while enjoying the great outdoors.