

# Newcastle's freebies

10 great things to see and do in Newcastle, for free.

**1 DISCOVER THE BOGEY HOLE:** a hand-hewn ocean rock pool carved out of a cliff face by convicts in the 19th century under the direction of Major James T. Morisset, the military commandant in Newcastle from 1819-1822, who used it for his personal bathing. Known for many years as 'Commandant's Bath', it became a public pool in 1863. It is still a popular swimming hole in a spectacular scenic location. Newcastle Beach.

**2 WALK THE BATHERS WAY:** a five-kilometre coastal walk from Nobbys Light House to Merewether that threads its way along Newcastle's foreshore, stringing together many of the city's prime historic attractions, and its best beaches. Don't forget to take your swimmers and a towel.

**3 MEREWETHER OCEAN BATHS:** Take a dip in the Merewether Ocean Baths. Opened in November 1935, these ocean baths are a popular swimming hole for families. They are reputed to be the largest sea baths in the southern hemisphere. Henderson Parade, Merewether.

**4 NEWCASTLE REGION ART GALLERY:** more than 3300 works of art, presenting a comprehensive overview of Australian art from colonial times to the present day and house many works by significant artists, including works by Nolan, Boyd, Bunny, Dobell, Drysdale, Coburn, Olsen, Olley, Williams, Cossington Smith, Perceval, Proctor and Preston. Laman Street, Newcastle. Open Tues-Sun, 10am-5pm.

**5 NEWCASTLE REGION MARITIME MUSEUM:** check out the boats, model ships and artefacts on display alongside exhibits relating to the Port's development over the past two centuries and the museum's large collection of historic photographs and paintings. Open Tue-Sun noon-4pm. Fort Drive Newcastle.

**6 BLACKBUTT RESERVE:** The perfect place for a relaxing family picnic or to explore the wonders of nature. Blackbutt Reserve provides nature trails, wildlife exhibits, children's playgrounds and recreational facilities. The Reserve has over 16 kilometres of tracks offering the ideal location for the enthusiastic walkers and joggers. Tracks vary from short gentle to long and hilly. You can walk through the rainforest restoration area or stroll through the open forest. Wildlife Exhibits open 9am to 5pm every day of the year.

**7 QUEENS WHARF TOWER:** Climb Queens Wharf Tower for great views of Newcastle and surrounds and Newcastle Harbour. The tower is 30 metres high and contains 180 steps (from ground level) to reach the observation level. The steps are narrow and winding and the tower does move a little during windy conditions.

**8 THE NEWCASTLE POLICE STATION MUSEUM:** inside the Hunter Heritage Centre building which functioned as a Police Station from 1861 until 1982. 90 Hunter St. Open Fridays and Saturdays 11am-3pm.

**9 KOORAGANG NATURE RESERVE:** 9km north of Newcastle, this is the largest single estuary wetlands reserve in NSW, a magnet for migratory shorebirds and there are good bird viewing areas near Stockton Bridge. You can also visit the Kooragang Wetlands, a rehabilitation project on Ash Island, and explore the mangroves along the boardwalk.

**10 WATAGANS NATIONAL PARK:** the headwaters of the Congewai and Quorrobolong creeks, which flow into the Hunter River, and the Gap and Dora creeks, which feed Lake Macquarie are all part of this swath of forest south of Cessnock. Rainforest walks and lookouts are highlights of the park and the many creeks are a great place to cool off on a hot day.



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