



SUNDAY DRIVE

Wollongong



Wollongong Cycleway

Something a bit different this time. We're always told to get more exercise so why not combine your Sunday drive with a cycle ride. Wollongong is a great choice with a fantastic cycle track running from Thirroul in the north to Wollongong and beyond in the south. And don't think that the lack of your own bicycle will get you out of this as bikes can be hired either in Wollongong (Wollongong Bike Hub www.wollongong.bikehub.com.au) or have them delivered to you by Mobile Bike Rental (www.mobilebikerental.com.au).

Ok, we'll start with the easy part, the drive. Check out the new Southern Gateway Centre and Jumbulla Aboriginal Discovery Centre at the top of Bulli Pass. The viewing platform gives the most spectacular views of the coast and once the restaurant opens I can see this being a favourite place to linger for a summer lunch. The aboriginal centre has some delicious jams, cordials etc for sale all made from bush foods such as quondongs and native limes. Well worth a visit.

On to Wollongong. Follow the signs to North Beach and Stuart Park which is where we will start the bike ride. If you feel in need of refreshment already, visit 'Northies' kiosk at North Beach. This is a beautiful spot to sit and soak up the sun and view whilst enjoying a coffee or juice. But enough of this lazing around. On your bike!

Follow the track through the park heading north to Fairy Meadow and Towradgi. Check out the plaque near the swimming pool at Towradgi Beach which has information on the *Queen of Nations* shipwreck which happened near here in 1881. Carry on north past Corrimal caravan park and beach until you come to Bellambi Lagoon. This is a lovely little

spot and a great place to sit for a while and watch all the water birds. Apart from the scenery the great thing about this bike track is that it is virtually flat. No nasty thigh burning hills.

If you are feeling really energetic you can carry on to Woonona, Bulli and Thirroul but if, like me, this is far enough for one day, turn back towards Wollongong. As you go past Towradgi, Blue Moon café on the beach is worth a visit for a quality coffee. Maybe try their affogato, it will have you coming back for more. Heading back through Fairy Meadow you might be lucky enough to see skydivers coming in to land. On any Sunday they are constant zooming earthward and landing in Stuart Park. By the way, if this appeals to you check out www.skydivethebeach.com .

The track leaves the beach for a while as it passes Wollongong Uni's new technology campus and the Science Centre and Planetarium. This Science Centre is a great interactive venue that has plenty to keep both kids and adults occupied. Don't leave without visiting the shop which has lots of weird and wonderful things to tempt you.

Back in Stuart Park, pause to watch the old guys playing boules, and taking it very seriously too. If you are feeling a bit hungry, carry on along the cycle track to Wollongong Harbour where you can enjoy some delicious fish and chips from Levendi while watching all the activity of the harbour (watch out for marauding seagulls). Bombora at the top of the harbour offers more sophisticated food and a liquor license.

Time to load up the bikes and head home. As you reach Appin why not stop off at the Appin Hotel for a cold beer and relax on the verandah while the kids work off any excess energy in the playground.