The Warrego Highway is a 744 km (462 miles) stretch from Brisbane through the Lockyer Valley, up and over the Great Dividing Range, across the Darling Downs and onto the outback towns of Charleville and Birdsville.

**DAY 1 – BRISBANE TO DALBY VIA TOOWOOMBA**

From Brisbane, the first stop is Ipswich, about an hour’s drive to the west and Queensland’s oldest provincial city. Gracious, ornate colonial buildings are interspersed with funky cafes and boutiques. Then it’s through the fertile plains of the Lockyer Valley and up the Great Dividing Range to Toowoomba, known as Queensland’s Garden City. Stop at one of the many gardens and parks. Back on the road, the vista opens out to fields of sunflowers, cotton and pasture towards Dalby, the hub of Australia’s richest grain and cotton growing area. On route, call into Jondaryan Woolshed. Built in 1859, it is the oldest and largest operating woolshed of its kind in the world, with more than 30 buildings to explore.

**Highlights**

- Ipswich, Queensland’s oldest provincial city.
- Toowoomba, with more than 150 parks and gardens.
- The Heritage-listed Woolshed at Jondaryan is the oldest and largest operating Woolshed in the world with over 150 years of history.
- Bunya Mountains National Park is nearby, with the world’s largest stand of bunya pines.
- Jimbour House, an elegant historical home.
- Follow the heritage trail in Dalby, past historic churches, houses and pubs.
DAY 2 – DALBY TO ROMA

On the second day, head to Roma via the hamlet of Warra, where the rambling timber pub is a must-see, then Chinchilla, the melon capital of Australia, with a quarter of the country’s watermelons, rock and honeydew melons produced around the thriving rural town. Wildflowers often carpet the countryside on the drive from Chinchilla to Miles, some 60 km west.

Learn much about Roma at the Big Rig, a museum focused on the country’s gas and oil exploration, including the discovery of natural gas in Roma. Romavilla Winery, established in 1863, is Queensland’s oldest winery and particularly well known for its range of fortified wines including muscats and amontillado.

Highlights

- The Miles Historical Village is one of the finest heritage museums in Australia.
- Dogwood Crossing Cultural Centre has changing exhibitions in two galleries.
- Roma’s Big Rig museum.
- Join in the excitement at the Roma Saleyards – the biggest store cattle selling facility in Australia.
- All things melon are celebrated at the Chinchilla Melon festival, held in February (every two years).

DAY 3 – ROMA TO CHARLEVILLE

Brigalow trees give way to mulga and the soil turns to red on the drive 88 km west to Mitchell. The town is most famous for its Great Artesian Spa, the largest open-air spa in Australia where the mineral rich waters allegedly ease all forms of ailments. This is now big sky country, where the night skies are amongst the clearest. At the Cosmos Centre and Observatory, peer into a telescope and see planets and stars during their night-viewing sessions. Charleville is also known as the bilby capital of Australia. The Save the Bilby Fund operates the Charleville Bilby Experience in the historic railway station where there is a chance to see one of these endangered Aussie marsupials up close.

Highlights

- Relax in the Great Artesian Spa, the largest open-air spa in Australia located in Mitchell.
- Morven Historical Museum houses a collection of immaculate miniature buildings representing the region’s early days.
- Almost touch the stars at the Charleville Cosmos Centre and Observatory.
- See the Australian marsupials at the Charleville Bilby Experience.
- Stop for a cuppa at the Mungalla Hotel.
DAY 4 – CHARLEVILLE TO QUILPIE
Continuing west through Cooladdi and its Fox Trap Hotel, the Warrego Way leads to Quilpie, located in the flat Channel Country floodplains. In town, visit St Finbarr’s Roman Catholic Church, where the altar, font and lectern are all made from local boulder opal. Call in and say hello to local artist Lyn Barnes at her Eagle Gallery. In the late afternoon, drive 7 km out of town to Baldy Top Lookout, perfect for watching the sunset.

Highlights
› Hotel Corones in Charleville is heritage-listed (1924) and is said to have a resident ghost.
› Stay or stop at the Quilpie Heritage Inn, located in the former Quilpie Hotel, which dates back to 1926.
› The Fox Trap Hotel is in the tiny town of Cooladdi is named for the original owner, Bob Fox, who loved a long yarn.

DAY 5 – QUILPIE TO WINDORAH
Leaving Quilpie, enter the heart of Channel Country. Before Windorah, cross a series of channels and see first-hand how these intertwined rivulets criss-cross the region, bringing water from northern Queensland. Check out the Windorah Solar Farm, where the distinctive silver dishes are estimated to save more than 100,000 litres of fuel a year. The Whitula Museum at the information centre is a re-creation of an 1800s homestead and well worth a browse.

DAY 6 – WINDORAH TO BIRDSVILLE
The last leg of the journey takes in one of outback Australia’s most iconic towns, Birdsville. It’s a long journey so it’s best to set off before daybreak to get to Birdsville before dark. About 167 km before Birdsville, Betoota is a ghost town set among the gibber plains and orange sand dunes. Birdsville (population 120) is the last town in Queensland before hitting the Simpson Desert.

Make sure to take in the sunset from Big Red, Australia’s highest sand dune, on the outskirts of town. Whilst watching the dazzling desert colours as the sun fades, it’s the perfect time to reflect on an epic journey that won’t soon be forgotten.

Highlights
› Stop and admire The Dreamtime Serpent, a remarkable piece of Indigenous artwork on a hill outside Betoota.
› Enjoy a cold beverage at the historic Birdsville Hotel, and sample a curried camel or kangaroo and claret pie at Birdsville Bakery, one of the few licensed bakeries in Australia.
› The famous Birdsville Races are held each year in September.
› The start of the Birdsville Track heads to Lake Eyre through Munga-Thirri (Simpson Desert) National Park – Queensland’s largest national park.