

CAMPERVAN ITINERARY · NEW SOUTH WALES

6 Day Waterfall Way Campervan Itinerary from Sydney

By Sabrina Allam · Road tripped with Mum in November 2026

6 days · 5 nights | **Start and finish** · Bankstown, Sydney | **8 waterfalls** on or near the route | **Walks** · easy to moderate | **Roads** · sealed on the main route

> This trip was in partnership with Apollo. We picked our van up from Apollo's Bankstown depot. We'd booked a 4 berth, and Apollo gave us their 6 berth Mercedes Sprinter instead. It's basically the same layout, plus the dinette table converts into an extra bed. We only needed the two.



THE TRIP

Six days, five nights

The Waterfall Way is one of the best first campervan trips you can do from Sydney, and I did it with Mum. Six days, five nights, from the gorges of the New England tablelands down through the Dorrigo rainforest to the beach at Trial Bay. Every stop is easy to get to, the campgrounds are beautiful, and none of the walks need you to be a big hiker. If you've been wanting to try campervanning, or take your mum or your kids somewhere special, this is the trip I'd send you on.

DAY 1
Sydney to Apsley Falls
About 430km · 6.5 to 7 hrs with stops

DAY 2
Apsley Falls to Wollomombi
About 2 hrs driving

DAY 3
Wollomombi to Dorrigo
About 1.5 hrs driving

DAY 4
A day in Dorrigo
Short hops only

DAY 5
Dorrigo to Trial Bay
About 2 hrs driving

DAY 6
Trial Bay to Sydney
About 5.5 hrs driving

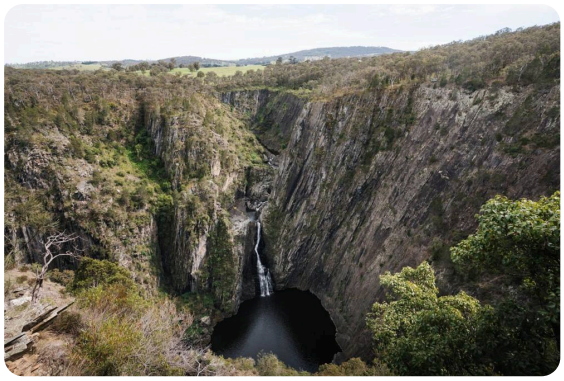
Solid lines are the drive out, the dashed line is the drive home. Numbers mark where we slept. Map is simplified for planning, not navigation.

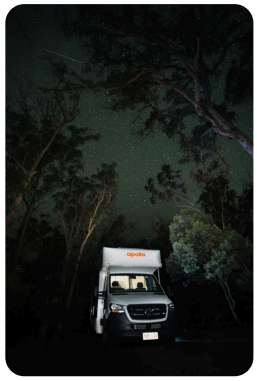
DAY 1

Sydney to Apsley Falls

About 430km · 6.5 to 7 hrs with stops







- **Pick up the van in Bankstown** Apollo's depot is at 125 Nancy Ellis Leebold Drive, Bankstown Aerodrome. We were there at 9am. Allow time for the walkthrough so you still have daylight for the drive, and watch the van videos in the app before you go.
- **Coffee in Stroud** Head up the M1 past Newcastle, then onto The Bucketts Way. Billy T Cafe in Stroud does seriously good coffee.
- **Fuel and supplies in Gloucester** Fill up and grab anything you forgot at Woolworths. It's the last proper town for a while.
- **Carsons (Pioneer) Lookout** Right on Thunderbolts Way between Gloucester and Nowendoc, at 936m. Huge views, a car park, toilets and a picnic area, and it's barely a detour. A great spot to stretch your legs or have lunch.
- **Thunderbolts Way to Walcha** The last couple of hours into Apsley are absolutely beautiful.
- **Apsley Falls campground** We rolled in around 6:30pm, just in time to walk to the first lookout before dinner.

Day 1 route in Google Maps

Apsley Gorge Rim Track

1.1km loop · 9m gain · About 15 mins

Easy

The short paved loop to the first lookouts. Perfect for when you arrive late.

View on AllTrails

NIGHT 1

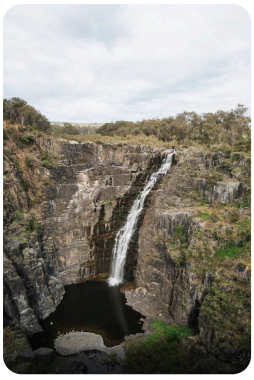
Apsley Falls campground, Oxley Wild Rivers National Park

Book your site online before you go. We stayed at Site 1 and it was beautiful: close to the cliffs, private, with mountain views and a lookout right behind it. NPWS provides firewood for the fire pits. No power and little reception.

DAY 2

Apsley Falls to Wollomombi

Via Walcha, Uralla and Armidale · About 2 hrs driving







- **Wake up to kangaroos** We stepped outside at 6:30am and there were kangaroos everywhere around the van. So peaceful.
- **The Apsley Falls walk** We did the whole thing: the swing bridge, the falls, then up and around all the lookouts. A few short steep bits, nothing tough. We took our time and ended up chatting to a lovely couple on the track for ages.
- **Coffee in Armidale** Seesaw is a really cute coffee shop. We parked a little up the road and walked. Armidale is also your stop for fuel and the dump point at the Arboretum on Galloway Street.
- **Optional: Aboriginal Cultural Centre and Keeping Place** 96 to 104 Kentucky Street, Armidale. Free entry, Monday to Friday 9am to 4pm and Saturday 10am to 2pm.
- **The drive out to Wollomombi** Farmland, rolling hills, cows and sheep. Really pretty.
- **Optional: Bakers Creek Falls** We didn't stop here, but it's about 20km east of Armidale off the Waterfall Way, a series of cascades dropping about 140m at the head of Metz Gorge, with toilets and picnic tables. The last 2km is a dirt road, so check your hire terms.
- **Wollomombi lookouts** Extremely beautiful lookouts and a beautiful campground. We drove between the lookouts, cooked lunch outside the van and saw lyrebirds and kangaroos. The falls were dry when we visited, so they're at their best after rain.

Day 2 route in Google Maps

Oxley Walk via Apsley Gorge Rim

4.0km return · 106m gain · About 1 hr

Easy

Swing bridge, the falls and the gorge lookouts. With the extra lookouts we walked about 5km.

View on AllTrails

Wollomombi Falls

4.2km return · 134m gain · About 1.25 hrs

Moderate

We just did the lookouts, which you can drive between. Do the full walk if the falls are flowing.

View on AllTrails

NIGHT 2

Wollomombi campground, Oxley Wild Rivers National Park

Our pick for the setting. Book online before you go. Unpowered, no reception and untreated water, so fill up in Armidale.

NEED A POWERED SITE?

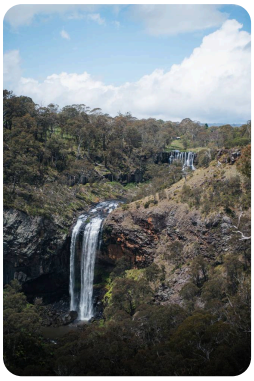
Stay in Armidale instead

Armidale Tourist Park has powered sites and full amenities, and Armidale has plenty more to do if you want a slower afternoon. Then visit Wollomombi Falls and the lookouts the next morning. It's right on the Waterfall Way, on your way to Ebor, so you won't miss a thing.

DAY 3

Wollomombi to Ebor Falls to Dorrigo

About 1.5 hrs driving







- **Slow breakfast and coffee** Ours was peanut butter on raisin toast with honey and berries, with coffee at the van. Then a few stops on the drive to take in the farmland.
- **Ebor Falls** Water flowing and extremely beautiful. We walked down and back up to the little lookouts. It's a proper track with boardwalks, so it really is for anyone: young kids, grandparents, the whole family. The upper falls precinct is wheelchair accessible too, with flat concrete paths, accessible toilets and motorhome parking. Highly recommend. Like every walk on this trip, it's great for all ages and nothing too challenging. Want something harder? See Cathedral Rock in the extra stops.
- **Optional: Cathedral Rock National Park** Want a bigger walk? The turn-off is just west of Ebor, and Woolpack Rocks or the Cathedral Rock summit track fit in a half day. The access roads are partly gravel, so check your hire terms. Details in the extra stops.
- **Dorrigo** The IGA for groceries, plus fuel and a dump point on Waterfall Way.
- **Dangar Falls Lodge** Our favourite campground of the trip. We booked two nights.
- **Dangar Falls** The lookout is a 30-second walk from camp, then follow the track down to the base. The falls were pumping. You can swim, it's just a little cold.
- **Dinner by the fire** Campfires are allowed at the lodge. We made burgers with the lot, which Mum rates as the best thing we ate all trip.

Day 3 route in Google Maps

Ebor Falls Walking Track

1.9km return · 44m gain · About 30 mins · Easy · Accessible option

Links the upper and lower falls with six lookouts. Short on time or using a wheelchair or pram? The 360m Upper Falls loop is flat concrete with no steps, and both of its viewing platforms are fully wheelchair accessible.

View on AllTrails

Dangar Falls Track

1.1km return · 23m gain · About 15 mins · Easy

From the top lookout down to the swimming hole at the base.

View on AllTrails

NIGHTS 3 AND 4 · STAY TWO NIGHTS

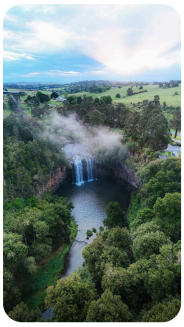
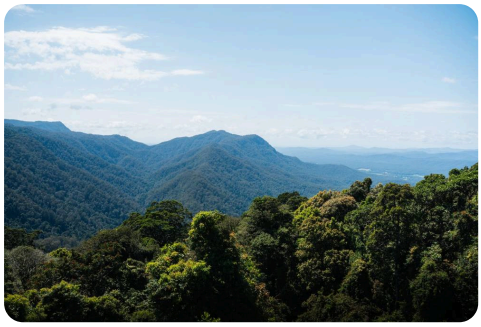
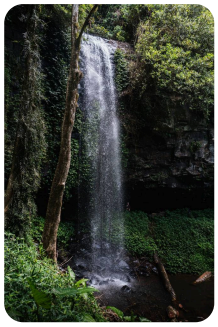
Dangar Falls Lodge, Camp and Caravan, Dorrigo

Do two nights here if you can. 180 Coramba Road, two minutes from town. Book ahead directly with the lodge. We had Site 19, a cute spot that felt private even with other campers around. Powered and unpowered sites, toilets and a double shower (hot showers take $1 coins), firewood for sale and a coffee cart on weekends.

DAY 4

A day in Dorrigo

Short hops only


- **Dangar Falls from the top** Up early to see the falls before the day starts.
- **Dorrigo Rainforest Centre and the Skywalk** A boardwalk out over the rainforest canopy. It wasn't busy on a weekday.
- **Wonga Walk** All rainforest: swing bridges, huge old trees, Tristania Falls, and Crystal Shower Falls, which you can walk behind. It's a properly made track with no scrambling over rocks or branches. Mum felt comfortable and safe the whole way. With the Skywalk it was about 8km for us.
- **Go early** It got quite humid by midday, and Crystal Shower Falls was busy.
- **A slow arvo at Dangar** We had a beautiful slow afternoon back at the campground. Hung out outside the van, chilled, watched the cows, and cooked lunch and dinner. Then a beautiful sunset. Having slower afternoons instead of rushing from place to place made the trip, so I'd really recommend two nights here. It's so nice, and there's so much to do in the area.
- **Back down to the falls for a swim** We headed back down to Dangar Falls wanting to swim, but a thunderstorm rolled in. It's a beautiful spot for a swim, so go for it if the weather's on your side.

Mum on the Wonga Walk"It was a little steep in some areas, but such a nice walk. I felt tired afterwards, but energised."

Dorrigo Rainforest Centre in Google Maps

Wonga Walk

6.1km loop · 207m gain · 2 to 3 hrs

Moderate

NPWS grades it Grade 3, with some steeper sections and steps.

View on AllTrails

Shortcut: Crystal Shower Falls

2.9 to 3.5km return · 125m gain · About 1 hr

Moderate

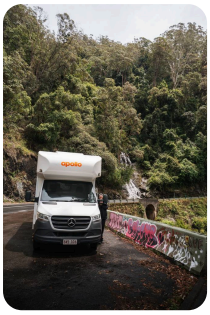
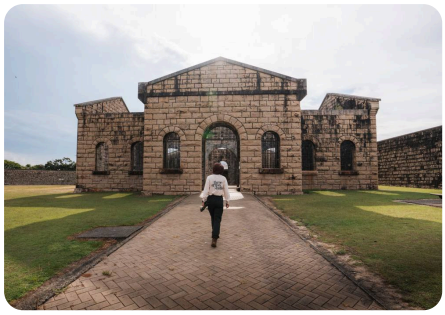
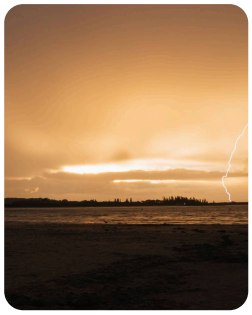
Park at The Glade picnic area and walk just to the falls. Lyrebird Lane to The Glade is gravel.

View on AllTrails

DAY 5

Dorrigo to Bellingen to Trial Bay

About 2 hrs driving


- **Coffee cart, then check out** The weekend coffee cart at the lodge was so nice. We left at 10am.
- **Down the mountain** Absolutely beautiful, with windy roads, so take it slow. Nothing hard.
- **Two waterfalls on the drive down** About 10 to 15 minutes out of Dorrigo you'll pass two roadside waterfalls on the Waterfall Way. Sherrard Falls comes first, about 7km from town. There's no parking, so just enjoy it from the car. Newell Falls is only 1km further down the hill, about 8km from Dorrigo, with a small parking bay right next to the falls. We pulled in, jumped out and took photos. Super easy stop.
- **Bellingen** Park on a side street near the tennis courts and it's a 2-minute walk to the main strip. Coffee at Hyde Bellingen, a café with a shop inside and a lovely vibe. We grabbed sourdough from the bakery too, and there's an IGA. The strip is full of shops and places to eat, so give it time.
- **Urunga boardwalk** The water was so clear you could see the fish, and people were swimming. A really refreshing stop.
- **Trial Bay Gaol** Kangaroos wander between the vans and the beach is a 30-second walk away. Get to the gaol before it closes at 4:30pm. Entry is $11 for adults.
- **Sunset on the beach** We had a huge lightning storm that knocked the power out across the campground for a couple of hours. The campers next door were so lovely and offered us their backup power if we needed it. We were fine, as the van runs on gas too, but it was such a kind gesture. That's the thing about camping trips like this: everyone you meet is just so lovely.

Day 5 route in Google Maps

Urunga Boardwalk

2.9km return · 11m gain · About 35 mins

Easy

Flat, pram friendly, and you can turn around whenever you like.

View on AllTrails

NIGHT 5

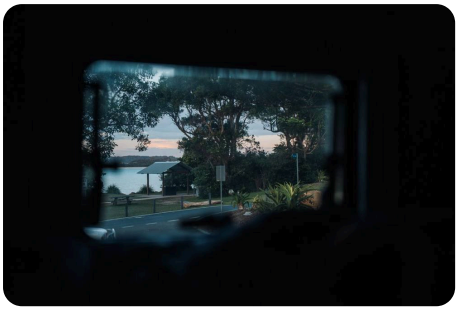
Trial Bay Gaol campground, Arakoon National Park

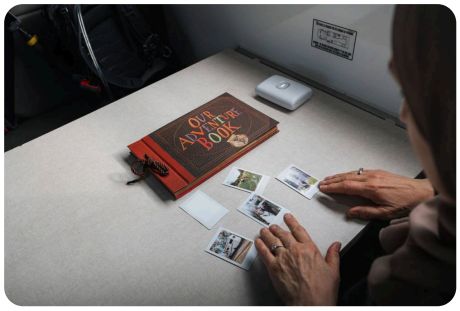
Book online through NSW National Parks. We had a powered site. The beach is right there, kangaroos everywhere, and there's a dump point at the campground for the morning.

DAY 6

Trial Bay to Sydney

About 5.5 hrs driving







- **Slow morning on the beach** Sunrise, coffee and breakfast by the water. After a big few days we skipped the walks and just enjoyed it.
- **Head off by about 8am** It's a long drive home down the Pacific Highway.
- **Got more time? Take it slow** There's so much to do on the coast on the way back to Sydney. If you can, add a night or two and split the drive. See the ideas in the extra stops.
- **Coffee in Taree** Plenty of cafés to choose from.
- **Before you return the van** Empty the toilet and refuel.

Day 6 route in Google Maps

If you have time: Monument Hill Loop

2.7km loop · 86m gain · About 50 mins

Easy

From the gaol over the hill to Little Bay and back.

View on AllTrails

If you have time: Smoky Cape Lighthouse

0.5km return · 29m gain · About 15 mins

Short and steep

The highest lighthouse in NSW, built in 1891, with huge coastal views and whales in season.

View on AllTrails

Extra stops if you have more time

We didn't get to these, but they're right on or near the route.

DORRIGO · HARDER WALK · GRAVEL ACCESS

Red Cedar Falls

The one I really wanted to do and didn't get to, so it's top of my list for next time. The largest waterfall in Dorrigo National Park, through towering red cedars. 8km return, 3 to 3.5 hours, Grade 5, with a steep 1.2km descent to the falls. Starts at the Never Never picnic area, via gravel Dome Road, so check your hire terms and the NPWS alerts, as it was closed for a long time after flooding.

Red Cedar Falls on AllTrails · NPWS page

DAY 2 · BETWEEN ARMIDALE AND WOLLOMOMBI · DIRT ROAD

Bakers Creek Falls

On your way from Armidale to Wollomombi (or Day 3 morning if you stayed in Armidale). About 20km east of Armidale, then roughly 2km of dirt on Old Hillgrove Road, so check your hire terms. A series of cascades dropping about 140m at the head of Metz Gorge, with toilets and a small picnic area. A few minutes from the car to the lookout.

NEAR ARMIDALE · REOPENING 2027

Dangars Falls and Dangars Gorge

This one was closed when we went, but if you're travelling after it reopens, go. The falls and gorge are huge and beautiful. The whole precinct (campground, picnic area, lookouts, McDirtys and Salisbury Waters walking tracks) is closed for an upgrade until 31 January 2027, as of November 2026. Check the NPWS alerts for the reopening date.

NEAR APSLEY FALLS · GRAVEL ACCESS

Tia Falls

We had this as our backup in case Apsley was dry, and with Apsley flowing we didn't need it. It's off the Oxley Highway, about 19km past the Apsley turn-off, then 7km of unsealed road that can get slippery when wet, so check your hire terms. The Tia Falls walk is short and easy, about 30 to 40 minutes return and great with kids, or do the longer Tiara walk for more of the gorge.

NEAR EBOR · GRAVEL ACCESS

Point Lookout, New England National Park

A famous sunrise spot high on the escarpment, with a short 0.6km loop to the lookout. It's at the end of Point Lookout Road, which is unsealed. NPWS lists it as fine for 2WD, but check the road conditions and what you're driving. In a hire campervan, check your hire terms first.

Point Lookout on AllTrails

NEAR EBOR · GRAVEL ACCESS

Cathedral Rock National Park

Another one I really want to come back for. The summit track is a bit more challenging, with a scramble over granite boulders to huge views. The Cathedral Rock track is a 6km loop, Grade 5, from Barokee. Woolpack Rocks is about 8km return with an easier summit, and the Warrigal walk is a 1km easy loop, both from Native Dog campground. The access roads are partly gravel, so check your hire terms. Barokee campground is closed for maintenance until 30 June 2027, but the tracks are open.

Cathedral Rock on AllTrails · Woolpack Rocks on AllTrails

NEAR BELLINGEN

The Promised Land

About 15 minutes from Bellingen through Gleniffer. Crystal clear swimming holes on the Never Never River, perfect on a hot day. It's a special place to the community, so leave no trace, and check it's open before you go, as swimming is sometimes closed for water quality.

DAY 5 · NEAR URUNGA

Bundageree Rainforest Walk

In Bongil Bongil National Park, just north of Urunga. A 6km loop (1.5 to 3 hours, Grade 3) through coastal rainforest to the rockpools at Bundageree Creek, with views of Tuckers Rocks and sea eagles overhead. Come back along the rainforest track, or along North Beach, which is very exposed.

Bundageree on AllTrails

SPLIT THE DRIVE HOME

Port Macquarie

About an hour south of Trial Bay, with powered holiday parks right in town, beaches and the coastal walk.

SPLIT THE DRIVE HOME

Forster and Tuncurry

Roughly halfway home, with plenty of holiday parks with powered sites on the water.

SPLIT THE DRIVE HOME

Myall Lakes National Park

Mungo Brush campground sits on the lake, unpowered, reached by a sealed road from Hawks Nest. Skip Bombah Point Road from Bulahdelah, which is unsealed.

Every walk on this trip

Distances, elevation and grades from AllTrails, except Crystal Shower and Red Cedar Falls (NPWS).

WALK	DAY	DISTANCE	GAIN	GRADE	LINK
Apsley Gorge Rim Track	1	1.1km loop	9m	Easy	AllTrails
Oxley Walk via Apsley Gorge Rim	2	4.0km return	106m	Easy	AllTrails
Wollomombi Falls	2	4.2km return	134m	Moderate	AllTrails
Ebor Falls Walking Track	3	1.9km return	44m	Easy	AllTrails
Dangar Falls Track	3	1.1km return	23m	Easy	AllTrails
Wonga Walk	4	6.1km loop	207m	Moderate	AllTrails
Crystal Shower Falls (from The Glade)	4	2.9km return	125m	Moderate	AllTrails
Urunga Boardwalk	5	2.9km return	11m	Easy	AllTrails
Monument Hill Loop	6	2.7km loop	86m	Easy	AllTrails
Smoky Cape Lighthouse	6	0.5km return	29m	Moderate	AllTrails
Tia Falls walk	Extra	About 1.5km return	n/a	Easy	n/a
Point Lookout	Extra	0.6km loop	41m	Moderate	AllTrails
Bundageree Rainforest Walk	Extra	6km loop	44m	Moderate	AllTrails
Red Cedar Falls	Extra	8km return	312m	Hard (Grade 5)	AllTrails
Cathedral Rock track	Extra	6km loop	n/a	Hard (Grade 5)	AllTrails
Woolpack Rocks	Extra	7.7km return	260m	Moderate	AllTrails

Where we stayed

Book every campground online before you leave Sydney.

NIGHT	CAMPGROUND	POWER	WHY WE LOVED IT
1	Apsley Falls (NPWS)	No	Cliff-edge lookouts, kangaroos, free firewood
2	Wollomombi (NPWS)	No	Beautiful lookouts and wildlife. Powered option: Armidale Tourist Park
3 and 4	Dangar Falls Lodge, Dorrigo	Yes	Our favourite. Private sites, the falls on your doorstep, a swimming hole
5	Trial Bay Gaol (NPWS)	Yes	Beach 30 seconds away, kangaroos everywhere

Fuel and dump points

FUEL

Gloucester, Walcha, Armidale and Dorrigo, then plenty along the Pacific Highway. Fill up at every town on the tablelands, as the gaps are long and winding.

DUMP POINTS

There are plenty along the route, so you're never far from one. The handy ones: Walcha (120 North St), Armidale (Arboretum, Galloway St), Dorrigo (Waterfall Way), Bellingen Showground (Black St) and Trial Bay campground.

GOOD TO KNOW

The WikiCamps or CamperMate app will find others nearby. Never empty the toilet into the bush or a drop toilet.

Tips for your first campervan trip

Before you go

When to go

Waterfalls are best after rain, but don't wait around for it. There wasn't a lot of rain before our trip and we still saw heaps of water everywhere except Wollomombi. I'd personally avoid the peak of summer, as the van gets warm when you're not plugged into power. If summer's your only option, tweak the trip: book powered sites, and lean into the swimming spots like Dangar Falls, the Promised Land and Trial Bay.

What it costs

Van prices change with dates and van type, so check the Apollo website for current rates. Campgrounds are booked separately.

No special licence needed

A normal car licence is all you need for a van like ours (Apollo's motorhomes are under 4.5 tonnes). Check the details with your hire company.

Book your campgrounds early

I booked everything about 5 days before we left. Apsley and Wollomombi still had plenty of spots, but we got the last site at Trial Bay, and Dangar Falls Lodge only had one powered site left. Book earlier than I did so you don't miss out on a powered site or the spot you want. There's also little or no reception at Apsley and Wollomombi to book on the road.

Watch the van videos first

A few times we went back to the app to rewatch them. Watch them before pick-up and you'll feel a lot more comfortable, especially if it's your first time in a motorhome.

Download your maps offline

I had reception most of the time on Telstra, but Mum didn't on Optus, and Apsley and Wollomombi have little or none. Don't rely on it either way: download your maps and bookings offline. I always carry my Garmin inReach too, and a PLB works just as well.

Shop the day before

Doing the big grocery shop before pick-up saves heaps of time.

Packing

Pack in duffels, not suitcases

Soft bags squash into the van's cupboards and under the seats, so they're packed away and not in your way.

Use packing cubes

I packed my clothes in Osprey Daylite Packing Cubes, sorted by each day's outfit, then put them straight into the van's cupboards. It made changing super easy. Bring a little laundry bag too.

Bring a hanging toiletry bag

The van's bathroom sink is tiny, with nowhere to put things down. I hung my Osprey Ultralight Roll Organizer in the bathroom for the whole trip and it made it so much easier.

Bring your own toiletries

Apollo provided dishwashing liquid, but bring your own hand soap, body wash, shampoo and conditioner. Small travel bottles are perfect.

Bring power banks

On a powered site you can charge everything from the van's ports. On unpowered nights you'll need power banks. I used mine for the first couple of nights to keep my cameras charged.

Camp chairs and a table

Apollo gave us camp chairs and a table, but there's a small extra charge for them. If you have your own, bring them.

On the road

Allow time at pick-up

The walkthrough takes a while. Leave early enough to still have daylight for stops.

It's easier to drive than it looks

A big motorhome looks way harder to drive than it is. It was so comfortable. I drove most of the time so Mum could relax, and she had a turn too. Just use a spotter whenever you're parking, reversing or squeezing in close to things. Even once I got comfortable, I always had Mum jump out and check.

Walk in the morning

You'll beat the heat, the humidity and the crowds.

Mix camping styles

National park campgrounds for the setting, a powered site when you need to charge up.

Leave room to chill

Some of the slow moments with Mum were the best part of the whole trip: taking our time on the walks at Apsley, chilling at the campground at Dangar Falls Lodge, and sitting on the beach at Trial Bay.

IN HER WORDS

Mum's take

I asked Mum a few questions once we got home. Here's the trip in her words.

"To be able to take some time off and spend precious quality time with my daughter."

HER HIGHLIGHT

"Bite the bullet and do it before it gets too late, so they won't regret it later on."

HER ADVICE FOR OTHER MUMS

"Definitely Dangar Falls. It was so much more accessible and the falls are stunning."

FAVOURITE WATERFALL

"It was easier than expected. The RV is massive, but very easy to navigate."

LIFE IN THE VAN

"People who camp are all so nice and friendly. When anyone needs something, they are always happy to help."

THE PEOPLE

"The parts that had lush forests and trees everywhere. Also seeing all the cows, horses and sheep along the way. Very cute."

FAVOURITE STRETCH OF ROAD

"It was amazingly comfortable. I wouldn't mind my own RV one day."

SLEEPING IN THE VAN

"If you love nature and beautiful scenery, this route is stunning. The more time you have the better."

WOULD SHE RECOMMEND IT?

"I would 100% do it again."

NEXT TIME? DOWN SOUTH TOWARDS VICTORIA.

The trip in three words: "Just absolutely awesome."

This trip was in partnership with Apollo. All opinions are my own. Prices, opening hours and closures were correct as of November 2026. Check NSW National Parks alerts before you go.
Find more trips at sabrinaallam.au