

ROSS, Tasmania

Tasmania's 2008 Tidiest Town & National finalist 2008

Situated approx 115 kms north of Hobart

Population: approx 300

1. Welcome

ROSS is one of Tasmania's hidden secrets, positioned off the Midland Highway, which is the main route between Hobart and Launceston. ROSS is actually bypassed by the highway and this assists in preserving the original character of the town. The pride of the wonderfully preserved heritage town is the ornate stone bridge which was constructed by convicts in 1836. The third oldest bridge still standing in Australia, it is recognised as one of the most important convict-built bridge in the country. An extremely active and well coordinated Hub community group coordinates a host of projects and activities under the Tidy Towns umbrella.

2. Heritage buildings

The district around ROSS was first explored by Europeans in 1807. Governor Macquarie named the river that runs through ROSS after himself when he traveled through the area in 1811. Today, ROSS is arguably the finest nineteenth century heritage village in Australia. The combination of the tree-lined main street, the stunning bridge and river, the location of Wesley Church at the top of the hill, and the many historically restored buildings, combine to provide peaceful ambience and aesthetic beauty.

3. Wool Centre

ROSS' Tasmanian Wool Centre is a non-profit organisation, which directs surplus funds to community projects as well as the preservation of the buildings and the heritage of ROSS and the region. The Centre, staffed mainly by volunteers, offers a range of tourism-related activities and is one of Tasmania's main tourist attractions attracting over 95 000 visitors a year. It offers a distinctive display of high quality Australian-made woollen garments, timber and crafts. It also features the historic development of ROSS and the region over the past 180 years, and also depicts the evolution of the sheep and wool industry in Australia.

4. Retail Developments

Maintaining ROSS' proud heritage is important to residents as well as the Northern Midlands Council. Heritage restoration is a major priority within the community with many fine examples of the preservation of cultural, retail and historic features. New developments within the town also link with the unique historic architecture of the village to complement the welcoming atmosphere within ROSS.

5. Landcare Initiatives

The active ROSS Landcare group, supported by the state Landcare organisation, have made a significant contribution to restoring the Macquarie River and its habitat by extensively clearing Crack Willow and replanting native shrubs and grasses. Great support has been gained from local residents, youth and a network of volunteers to return the area to its natural state. The town's volunteer Fire Brigade also contributed by removing and burning of non native debris.

6. Central Square

ROSS' Central Square raises awareness of the unique colonial past with the Man-O-Ross Hotel depicting Temptation, the Town Hall – Recreation, the Catholic Church – Salvation, the past local gaol – Damnation and the War Memorial – Commemoration.

Further highlights

ROSS' effluent from the town's treatment plant is currently being assessed for use on local farming properties – a sustainable use of a useable resource which is normally discarded.

Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) principles are being adopted as a result of Council's Subdivision Development Guidelines enabling the effective diversion of stormwater from natural watercourses.

Somercotes Historic Estate, situated adjacent to ROSS, is a fine example of one of Australia's significant and cultural properties settled in around 1823. Visitors are also able to sample a wonderful selection of fresh cherries grown within the estate's fine orchards.

The community is an active supporter of the Midlands Biodiversity Hotspots program that funds a number of conservation agreements which protect threatened species unique to the region in and around ROSS.

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