

THE STRATHBOGIE REGION

The Strathbogie Region is an elevated area encompassing boulder-strewn paddocks, wind-swept tablelands and densely-forested gullies. Mt Strathbogie and Mt Wombat are the highest peaks and the Goulburn River flows along the southern boundary with Hughes Creek and the Seven Creeks forming the principle upland streams. The bushland abounds with kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, possums, echidnas, a wide variety of bird-life, plus rarer creatures such as the platypus and spotted quoll.

The first white men to travel through the Strathbogie Region were Hamilton Hume and William Hovell in 1824 during their exploration of what was then known as the 'Port Phillip District'. Their route took them either through or close to the present sites of Barjarg, Ancona, Merton, Molesworth and Yea on the outward journey and Tallarook, Seymour, Avenel, Longwood, Euroa and Benalla on their return. Their enthusiasm for this region excited colonists' interest, although it was another decade before settlers defied government bans on expansion and took matters into their own hands.

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It was only a few years after Melbourne was founded in 1835, that pastoral runs of 70,000 acres and more were leased in the Upper Goulburn. Among the earliest runs were Tallarook and Muddy Creek (Yea) in 1837; Seven Creeks, Ghin Ghin and Avenel in 1838; Killingworth (1839); Dropmore and Habbies Howe, (1841); and Strathbogie (1846). Sheep-rearing for wool, meat and tallow was the main occupation. Conditions were primitive, with no real roads, mail or public transport and most people living in bark huts. The region was inhabited mostly by young bachelors, known as the 'Goulburn Mob'.

