



Penrith Valley- A Bonus of Big City Living

The secret of living in any big city is finding an opportunity to get away. In Europe, the States and the UK, major cities come down with arterial sclerosis as their inhabitants battle to quit weekday pace and pressure for the bliss of weekend serenity.

Sydney is considerably luckier. Just 55 minutes drive from either Sydney Airport or the Central Business District is Penrith Valley. One minute rapid motorway, the next an awesome bushclad gorge. Silent sites sacred to the ancient culture of the Gandangara and Darug people, cheer-filled venues celebrating the excitement of Olympic competition.

It's no surprise that Penrith Valley's theme is River ... Mountains ... Lakes. What is surprising is that this adventure playground of unspoiled bushland, national park and landmarks of European colonisation is just 55kms from central Sydney.

The eastern escarpment of the spectacular Blue Mountains plateau begins less than five kilometres west of Penrith and extends over a quarter of a million hectares of native bushland. This, five kilometres from a modern city of more than 170,000 people that manages to blend reminders of a colonial past with the facilities and attractions of a sophisticated regional centre.

Penrith Valley is centrally located for most daytrippers and offers quick road and rail access. It is an ideal self-drive short break for Canberrans, at only 270km – a leisurely three-hour drive – away, and has a wide range of accommodation from family cabins to rural retreat cottages. The city has a lively entertainment and arts scene, impressive sporting facilities, diverse dining opportunities and shopping options from market stalls to marble halls.

The Nepean River - one of the longest in Eastern Australia - flows into Penrith through a gorge carved from sandstone over countless millennia. It departs, leaving behind the Olympic venues of Penrith Whitewater Stadium and the International Regatta Centre - part of the Penrith Lakes Scheme, a visionary program to rehabilitate the Nepean River floodplain after many decades of sand and gravel mining.

The Penrith Lakes Scheme will eventually provide Penrith with a 2000-hectare public recreation area featuring seven lakes offering recreation opportunities and environmental protection and enhancement. Penrith, then, is a glimpse of the past, a vision of the future.