



### 1 SALTBUSH RETREAT, LONGREACH

Saltbush Retreat is within easy walking distance of key Longreach attractions such as the Australian Stockman's Hall of Fame and the Qantas Founders Museum. And the trio of al fresco tubs here are the perfect spot to wash off dust from the day's adventures. Guests staying in the homestead stables or slab huts can access the freestanding clawfoot tubs on the outdoor bath terrace. You can't book the space for your exclusive use, so be prepared to bathe alongside other travellers and share your road trip tales. Each tub is paired with a side table hewn from a local timber log, providing just enough room for drinks and snacks. Pamper packs that include a bottle of sparkling water, slippers, loofahs, chocolates and bath salts, plus coffee and tea, are included in some accommodation packages. The Longreach Indulgence Package includes a two-night stay, pamper packs, breakfast baskets and additional food and drinks, for \$1700 a couple.

[saltbushretreat.com.au](http://saltbushretreat.com.au)



### 2 CUNNAMULLA HOT SPRINGS, CUNNAMULLA

Galahs soar overhead as I bob in the warm waters of the Gulbari (emu) pool overlooking a muddy Warrego River. I'm at Cunnamulla Hot Springs, the newest inclusion on Queensland's Wellness Way, a trail of 24 springs, pools, spas and bathhouses, most of which draw geothermic waters from the Great Artesian Basin. Cunnamulla Hot Springs' main open-air pools have a serpentine, earthy appearance, as though thrown on a potter's wheel. Five of these contain artesian waters ranging from 38C to 43C, with signs encouraging guests to stay hydrated while bathing. There's also a cooler indoor pool (26-28C), a cold plunge pool (10C), sauna, steamroom, and indoor and outdoor showers. A Body Clay Ritual can be enjoyed for an additional \$20. Post-soak, head to the relaxation lounge for herbal tea, or meditate in a hanging egg swing chair. Cunnamulla Hot Springs closes during summer. Adult admission, \$45.

[cunnamullahotspings.com](http://cunnamullahotspings.com)

## FEEL THE SERENITY

Drift along Queensland's trail of mineral hot springs, pools, spas and bathhouses

DENISE CULLEN



### 3 THE LAKE BATHHOUSE, QUILPIE

Quilpie has two artesian bores flowing with such scalding water that residents in town require cooling tanks in order to use it, says Dan Hoch, owner of The Lake Quilpie. But being 6km out of town, the tap water on this vast property has had time to cool down, which makes calibrating the temperature of my bath in The Lake Bathhouse a cinch. The Lake Quilpie runs sheep, beef cattle, and Kalahari red goats. In 2017, Hoch and wife Louise introduced a tourism sideline. Six years later, they built The Lake Bathhouse, a spacious metal shed with peaked roof (half open to the heavens), two clawfoot tubs, a pot-belly heater, and table and chairs. Louvres can be opened for views towards Lake Houdraman or closed completely for privacy. I loll amid bubbles and listen to goats bleating in the distance. Camp overnight or stay in the renovated shearers' quarters or cottages. One-hour bathhouse access, \$20 a person.

[thelakequilpie.com](http://thelakequilpie.com)

### 4 SHANDONVALE STATION, BARCALDINE

Climb a set of steps at Shandonvale Station to reach a bathtub with a bird's-eye view. Sprawled over more than 60sq km, this working sheep station offers guests a range of experiences. Options include animal feeding, shooting at the gun range, helicopter excursions to neighbouring homesteads, and hands-on lessons in humanely harvesting an animal and preparing it for the table. The copper bathtub nestled 8.5m high in a river gum tree is a fitting reward for all that exertion. When filled with 32C artesian waters, it can accommodate up to eight people. While the west-facing orientation makes for superlative sunset views, station manager Deon Stent-Smith reckons "any time" is a good time for a soak here. Food and drinks can be purchased to enjoy while you bathe. The tub is available only to in-house guests of Shandonvale Station. Stays from \$260 a person, a night.

[shandonvalestation.com.au](http://shandonvalestation.com.au)



### 5 ARTESIAN MUD BATHS, EULO

Once a riverside stop for drovers moving cattle along stock routes, Eulo today is a tiny town of fewer than 100 residents. Though there's not much more than a hotel and a general store, Eulo still draws a disproportionate number of road trippers, thanks to its quirky artesian mud baths. Upon arrival, my husband and I are led into an open-air cubicle surrounded by thatched walls that's warmed by a gidgee wood fire. Our attendant turns on taps affixed to an old tree stump and tips milky white clay into the 3m-long clawfoot tub. She then presents us with pots filled with thick, mineral-rich mud, which is designed to be slathered on skin and then rinsed off. Wearing sombrero hats to deter the Outback flies, we sip on wine and snacks set out on a bath caddy between us. Adult admission, \$95; includes towel, face washer, moisturiser, beverage, and snacks.

[artesianmudbathseulo.com.au](http://artesianmudbathseulo.com.au)