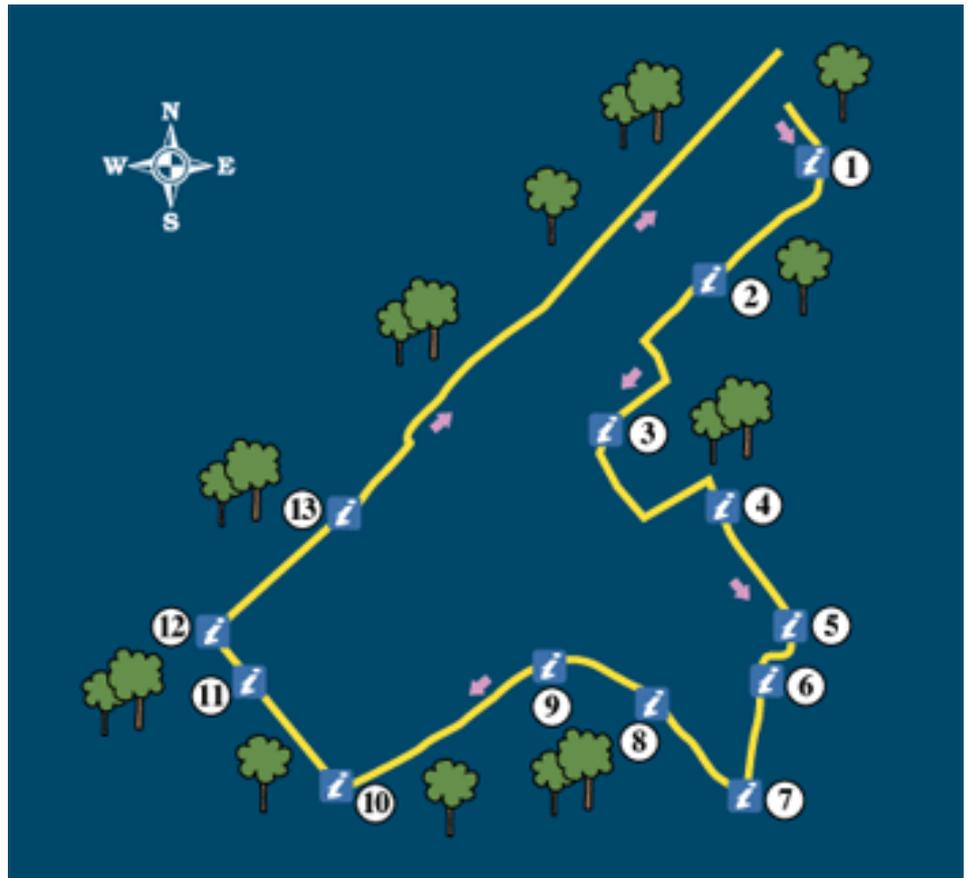


Mullewa Rail Heritage Loop

Mullewa's Rail Heritage Loop is a comfortable 1,420 metre walk through the once-expansive railway precinct.

The trail is easy to follow and uses well-graveled paths for most of the route.

At a leisurely pace taking time to read the interpretive panels allow 30 – 45 minutes to complete.



The opening of the railway line from Geraldton to Mullewa in November 1894 triggered a period of rapid development in the fledgling town.

Then in 1915 the inland line through to 'midlands' (Morawa, Wongan Hills etc.) to Northam cemented Mullewa's place as a major rail centre.

At one time in the 1940s there were more than 25 railway houses in town, and the rail precinct was a hive of activity.

This trail will introduce you to the many aspects of life in a busy rail depot and to some of the characters who worked here.

Waypoint 1 – Light my Fire: The Coal Stage

Mullewa's rail precinct was home to a host of steam engines and the 'coal stage' was a key component in the operations here. If you look carefully you might still see a dark tinge to the soil around here, the product of decades of coal dust.

Waypoint 2 – The 'Flu-Fighting' Loco Shed

Who would have thought that Mullewa's loco sheds could ward off the symptoms of flu?

The town's idea to use the running sheds for the purpose of steam inhalation is a true reflection of the ingenuity of rural Australia.

Waypoint 3 – A 'Notable Example' of a Goods Shed

The Mullewa goods shed was a focal point for trade through the town once trains were operating both westward to Geraldton and south to Perth via the midlands. It is now one of the last standing goods sheds in Western Australia.

Waypoint 4 – Heart of the Precinct: The Station

The railway station wasn't just a stop to board and depart trains; its tearooms, parcel rooms and offices made it a business and social precinct in early Mullewa as well.

Waypoint 5 – Where Single Men Stayed: The Barracks

The 'train men's barracks' were quarters for all single men who came to work in Mullewa. Find out how they lived in the early decades of the 20th century.

Waypoint 6 – A Mighty Tank and Stand

Though the tank and its stand have seen better days, they are still a potent reminder of the vital role of water in the early railway networks.

Waypoint 7 – Dams, Bores, Tanks and Mills

The difficulties of operating train services in the early 1900s with limited water was immense but was somewhat alleviated by the 111,250L capacity tank.

Waypoint 8 – At Home on the Precinct: Railway Housing

Railway cottages were simple affairs used to house railway families working on the further reaches of the railway network. The three room cottages were considered a luxury compared to the Balt's Camps that consisted of two army surplus tents and an outdoor cooking area.

Waypoint 9 – Fill 'er Up: The Water 'Bowser'

Trains passing through Mullewa would fill their tenders with water via a flexible canvas hose from the iron tank upon the hill. Some trains carried additional tanks especially on steep routes that required a lot of steam. Try to imagine how many thousands of gallons might have flowed out of this canvas spout from 1904 to the coming of diesel in 1955!

Waypoint 10 – Drains That Feed the Dams

It is ironic that in a town that is prone to savage droughts much effort has also gone into various means of flood control. The construction of Station Dam and then Stockyard Dam encouraged early engineers to attempt to divert floodwaters to good use. The drain was intended to catch runoff water from the precinct, keep water out of town and channel it into one of the two dams.

Waypoint 11 – A Well-Placed Private Hospital

Keston Hospital and its first resident doctor, Dr John Hobbs was a big step forward for the small country town of Mullewa. Prior to this they relied on visiting doctors and short-term clinics established by nursing sisters.

Waypoint 12 – The Boss's Place: The Station Master's House

A four room cottage was erected little more than a stone's throw away from the original station building on Gray Street for the Station Master meaning he would not have far to go to work. This proximity of Station Master's house and station was repeated at countless towns across rural Australia.

Waypoint 13 – Social Heart of Town: The Railway Institute

Built during 1948-49 the Institute was designed to serve the recreational needs of the substantial railway staff based in Mullewa. A large hall with a stage at one end dominated the western wing while the eastern end of the building housed a billiard room and a library and reading room.