



# RAILWAY DAM

## A WONDERFUL HISTORY

This historic dam is a great spot to have a picnic, take a walk, go bird watching, or see the local tortoises. RV camping is permitted and there are two gas fired barbeques and picnic tables. An information bay describes the early history of the railway network, and the post-war European immigrants who have made a great contribution to the district. There are two easy walk trails around the dams. Cyclists and dogs on a leash are welcome. Public toilets nearby in the town.

When the first steam train passed through Narrogin from Beverley to Albany in 1899 it was a hamlet with very few people. Within 30 years Narrogin had become a bustling town with the largest train junction outside of Perth. Over a third of Narrogin's population were directly dependent on railway employment. Railway Dam was built in 1912 as a water supply for steam locomotives.



Rising water tables due to widespread land clearing for agriculture caused land and water sources like Railway Dam to become more saline.

To reduce this a spaghetti-like system of drains and weirs was constructed to separate fresh and saline water.

Today the brackish water of the dam supports a thriving population of long-necked tortoises, introduced redfin perch and Gambusia fish, frogs and birds, with seasonal visitors such as spoonbills, kingfishers, waterfowl, and herons.



### TIP FOR SIGHTSEEING

*If you stand on the bridge in the early morning, tortoises and ducks come to visit. Please don't feed them as it pollutes the water?*



From the town centre, drive south down Federal Street until you see the Main Roads Department. Turn right on to Mokine Road, and right again at the Railway Dam sign.

A memorial and associated information commemorates a remarkable time in the 1950's when European immigrants came from displaced persons camps to Australia. In return for free transport, they were required to spend 2 years working for the government. Conditions in the camps established to the south and west of Railway Dam were hard with no running water or sewerage.

Many of these people obtained their own house and remained in Narrogin to become leading citizens.



The **Dam Walk** (white arrows 650 metres) is an easy 15-minute walk around the eastern dam wall amongst shady flooded gums that provides walkers with a lovely view of the dam and water birds.

The **Archibald Park Trail** (red arrows, 1200 metres) is an easy 40-minute walk.

Archibald Park was built as the only jet boat course outside Perth in 1992.

Water was pumped into the course from Railway Dam for an event twice a year.

It was abandoned after two years but started again in 2020.



*This [blog](#) has more detailed information, including an account of the life and times of the post-World War 2 European immigrants*

