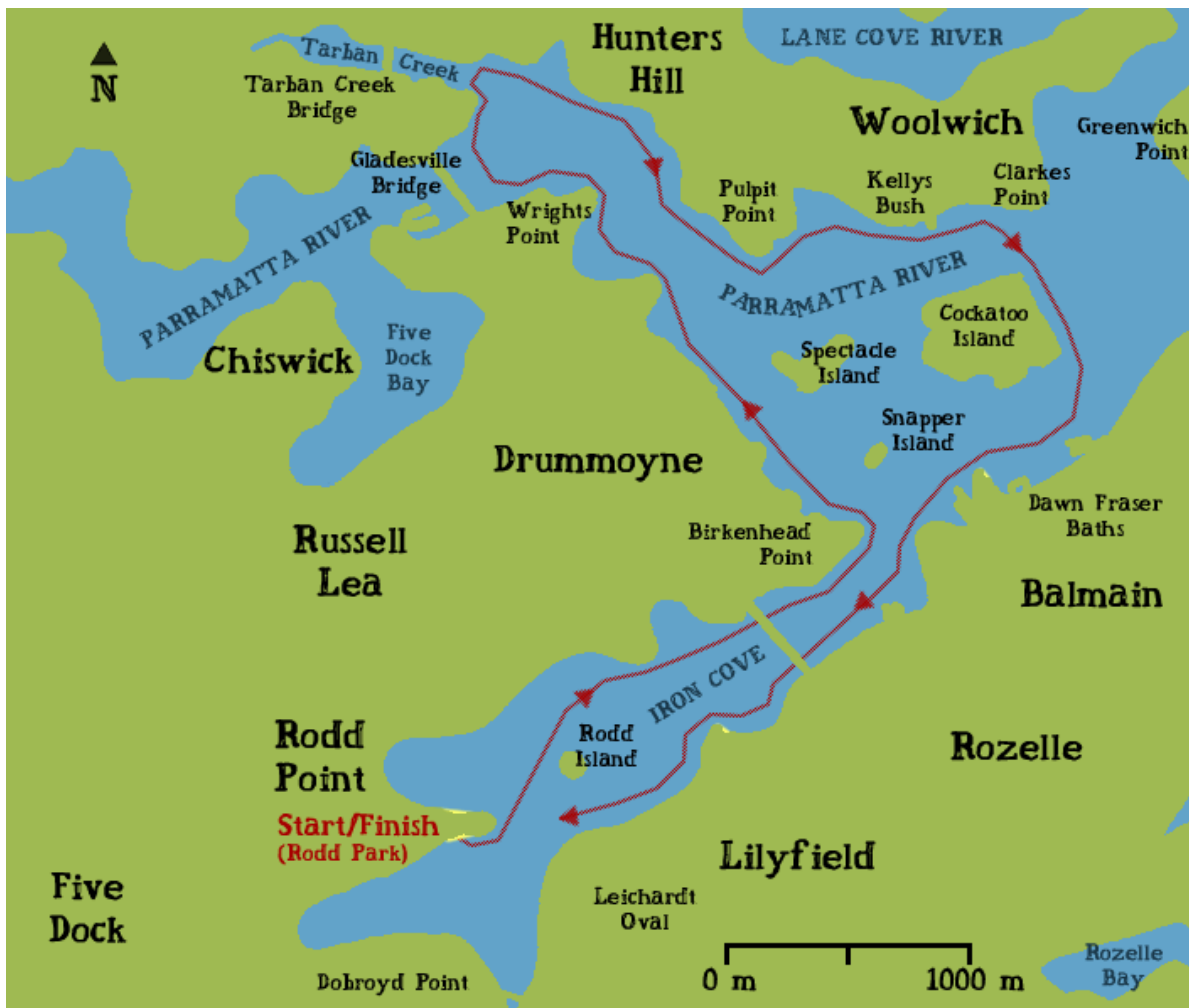


Sydney Harbour West

A day on Sydney Harbour is always a treat due to the wealth of world famous landmarks and fascinating history. The four islands and three bridges of this paddle ensure that it is no exception.

WATERWAY	Iron Cove, Parramatta River, Tarban Creek
REGION	Sydney, NSW
DISTANCE	15 km
TIME	3 hours
START	Rodd Park, Henley Marine Dr Rodd Point NSW
GPS	33 51' 57.31" S 151° 8' 51.05" E
FINISH	Return to start
PARKING	Small car park
CONDITIONS	Some open areas, tidal, some heavy traffic



Directions to Henley Marine Drive, Rodd Point are available from www.maps.google.com.au.

Sydney Harbour West

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHS **Scott Rawstone**

The urban environment can provide a backdrop as amazing as any untouched wilderness. You just need to know the history and culture and Sydney has both in bucket loads.

This trip is basically a lap of the western end of the harbour that starts and ends at Rodd Point, less than 10 kilometres west of the Sydney CBD. The first point of interest as you paddle away in a north easterly direction is the island with the same name. Rodd Island is part of the Sydney Harbour National Park and you are allowed to land if you have booked in advance. Wedding parties are often the only ones with the foresight to do that. If you see a ceremony in progress, try not to upstage the bride! Fascinatingly, in the late 1800s Louis Pasteur used this island to conduct (unsuccessful) biological research for the 'NSW Government Royal Commission on Rabbit Extermination'.

Continue on to the north east under the Art Deco style Iron Cove Bridge and then make a left around Birkenhead Point. From here you can see both Snapper and Spectacle Islands and can choose to go over for closer look at them or hug the mainland at Drummoyne as you head towards Gladesville Bridge. Drummoyne has an incredibly long history. It was founded in 1794 at the start of the main land route out of Sydney.

Snapper Island is the smallest island in the harbour but finding it is easy. Just look for the two tall cabbage tree palms. It was just a rocky outcrop until the 1930s when it was extended and bizarrely made into the shape of a ship. Unfortunately, it is not open to the public because of safety concerns but you can get a close look from the water. Spectacle Island is not open to the public either. It belongs to the navy and big signs warn you to keep your distance. Pity... it has a beach that would be awesome for watching the sun set over Drummoyne.

Cross to the northern side of the Parramatta River at Gladesville Bridge then trace the affluent Hunters Hill shoreline east past Pulpit Point to Kellys Bush, the site of the first 'green ban' in the world! In the early 1970s, residents who believed that this area rightly belonged to the community joined with workers unions to stop the council from allowing it to be sold for development. Their success led the way for similar actions that saved parts of The Rocks, Woolloomooloo and Centennial Park.

Next you will visit heritage listed Cockatoo Island, the largest island in Sydney Harbour! Keeping a watchful eye on other traffic, paddle across Parramatta River and around the island's eastern end. Historically, it has been used for a number of purposes, most notably a convict prison and a shipyard. A lot of the old buildings and machinery still remain and the Sydney Harbour Trust runs regular walking tours. More recently, the space has been taken over by music and comedy festivals like 'All Tomorrow's Parties' and 'World's Funniest Island'. It was even a film set for 'X-Men Origins: Wolverine'.



Continuing on to the southern shore of the waterway, you will see a large green structure. This houses the tidal saltwater pool of the Dawn Fraser Baths in Balmain. Built in the 1880s, it is said to be the oldest pool in Australia.

It's also the last stop on this tour. From there, simply head south west into Iron Cove and back to Rodd Point.

"No great man ever complains of want of opportunities." Ralph Waldo Emerson

PADDLE GEAR & ADVICE	Blue Earth 48a Formosa Street Drummoyne (02) 9181 5266	BED	Cockatoo Island Camping Cockatoo Island (02) 8898 9774	FOOD	The Cove at Drummoyne 1 Henley Marine Drive Drummoyne (02) 9719 3022
PUB/ HOTEL	P.J. Gallagher's 195 Victoria Rd Drummoyne (02) 9181 1229	TOILET	Near start	OTHER PADDLES	Lane Cove River Lavender Bay