



Visitor guide

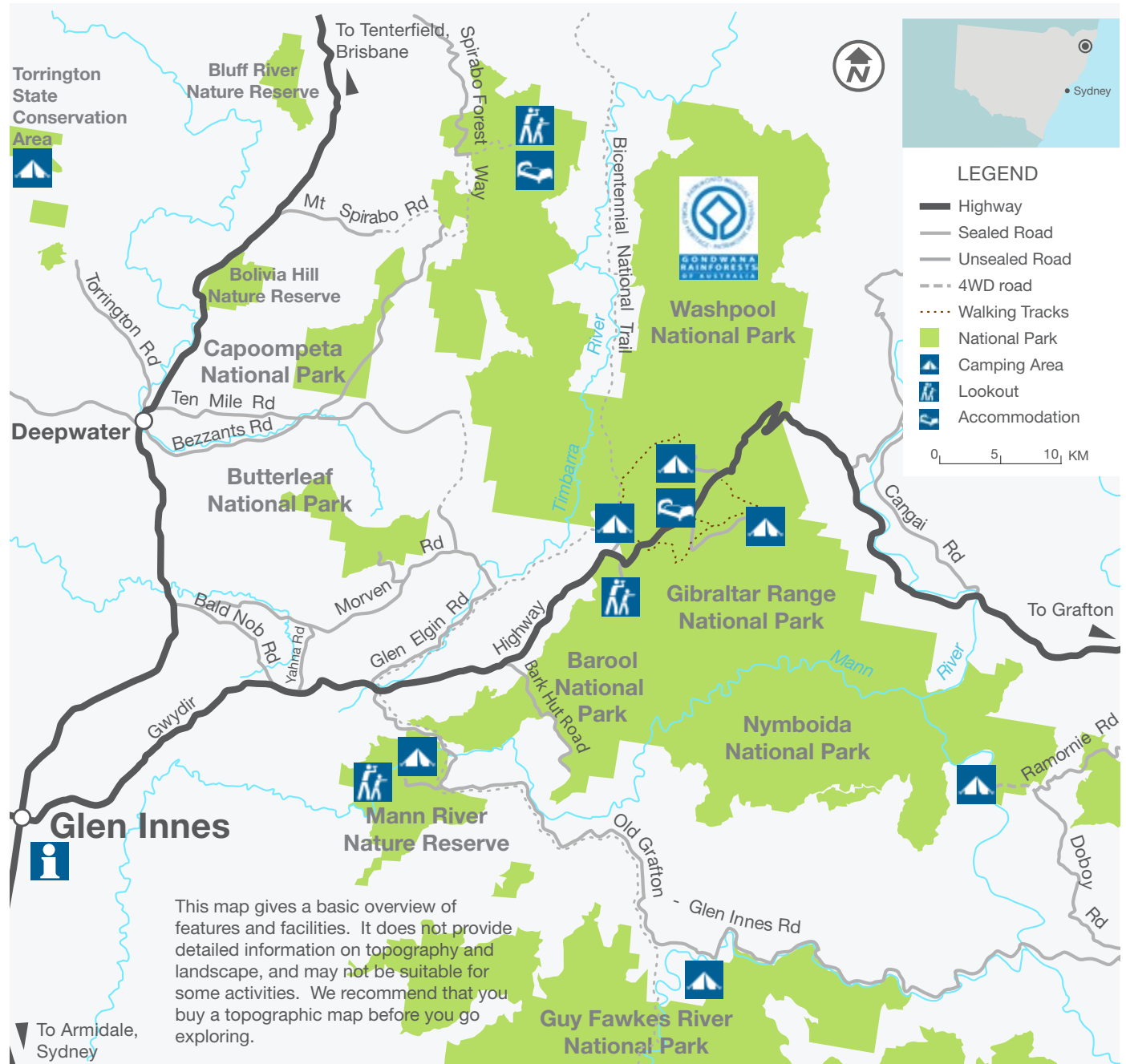
National Parks along the Gwydir Highway

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National Parks along the Gwydir Highway



Granite peaks, rainforests & wild rivers

Spanning the eastern edge of the Great Dividing Range in northern New South Wales are the national parks along the Gwydir Highway. Striking granite outcrops and steep escarpments, wild rivers, woodlands, spectacular flowering heathlands and World Heritage rainforests provide a varied backdrop for a choice of activities. Sightseeing, camping, bushwalking, swimming, cycling or birdwatching are just some of the ways to enjoy these parks.

Getting There

The Gwydir Highway between Glen Innes and Grafton provides access to many of these parks.

Gibraltar Range National Park is via a nine-kilometre gravel road off the Gwydir Highway.

Washpool National Park is via a 4km gravel road off the Gwydir Highway. This road is steep in parts and may be slippery during wet conditions.

Barool National Park is also off the Gwydir Highway and is suited to 4WD vehicles only.

Butterleaf National Park Butterleaf National Park is via gravel roads and should be accessed via Butterleaf Road, off Morven Road. 4WD drive only.

Mann River Nature Reserve is 125km west of Grafton along the Gwydir Highway and 37km east of Glen Innes. Take the unsealed Old Grafton Road and drive for approximately 2km before descending 14km on sealed road to the base of Big Hill. This section of road is suitable for caravans however travelling past the reserve there are height restrictions and the road is narrow along the remaining section of road.

The World Heritage walk

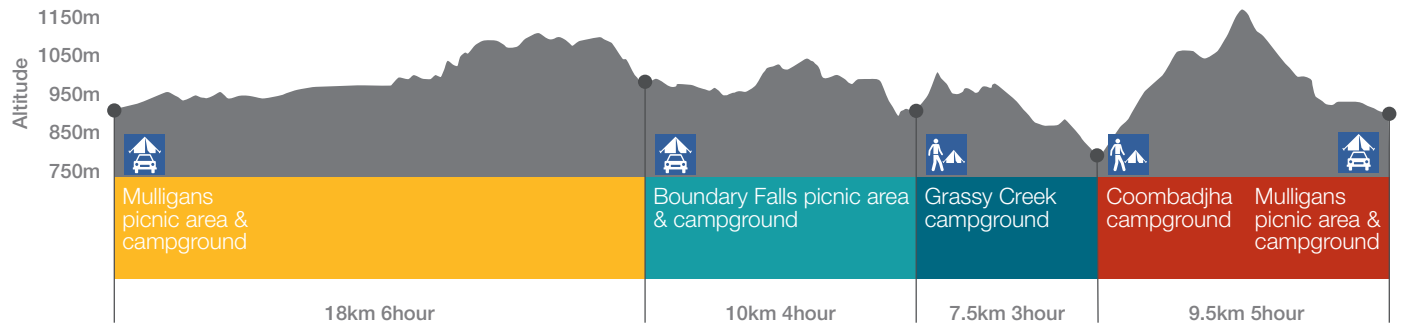


Grade: medium

Distance: 45km circuit, 3- 4 days

The World Heritage walk links Gibraltar Range and Washpool National Parks through dramatic and diverse landscapes. The walk is a 45km circuit along walking tracks, management trails and roads. There are plenty of side trips off the main trail, refer to walks 1-13.

Dry eucalypt forests dominate the tops of ridges and granite outcrops, surrounded by a mosaic of subalpine swamps. In gullies lush warm-temperate to sub-tropical rainforests encompass the largest area of unlogged coachwood in the world. Waterfalls plummet from a network of streams and wild rivers within wilderness which offers refuge to a rich variety of wildlife including many rare and endangered species.



Australian walking track grading system



Grade 1 is suitable for people with a disability with assistance



Grade 2 is suitable for families with young children



Grade 3 is recommended for people with some bushwalking experience



Grade 4 is recommended for experienced bushwalkers



Grade 5 is recommended for very experienced bushwalkers



Gibraltar Range Waratah. Koen Dijkstra/DPIE

Flora

Plant communities in these parks range from extensive rainforests, wet and dry forests to the smaller plant communities of the swamps, heaths and rock outcrops.

Rainforest types include the dominant warm temperate rainforest, and more restricted patches of lowland subtropical, cool subtropical and dry rainforests. Tall open wet and dry forests are dominated by eucalypts, including the magnificent Sydney blue gum.

The Gibraltar Range waratah is a spectacular feature of the dry forests and heathlands in late spring and early summer. The Gibraltar Range waratah (*Telopea aspera*) shows why it was given its genus name: *Telopea* means 'seen from afar'. Please leave these spectacular blooms for all to enjoy. Christmas bells cover golden swamp and sedgeland with bright splashes of scarlet in December.



Christmas Bells. Michael Jarman

Cultural Heritage

The lands incorporated in these parks are an important area for Aboriginal people. The Bundjalung, Gumbaynggirr and Ngorabul peoples used these areas for ceremonies, including initiations, when they travelled between the coast and the tablelands. Today, the forests have important sites which are central to the identity of current and future Aboriginal people.

Early European land use was focused on logging, grazing and mining. European settlement in the region started in the 1840s and by the 1860s there were timber, sheep and cattle enterprises and a track connecting the coast and the New England Tablelands. The Washpool area was most well-known for its red cedar trees while gold and tin mining took off in the late 1800's throughout the area.



Mulligans Hut, Gibraltar Range National Park. Leah Pippos



Spotted-tailed quoll. Jim Evans

Fauna

The varied plant communities support a diverse range of wildlife in the national parks. Over 170 bird species, 30 reptile species and more than 50 mammal species have been recorded.

A relatively common inhabitant of the rainforest is the superb lyrebird. A master of mimicry, it can sometimes be heard sending out a chorus of other bird calls and may even mimic sounds of human activity. Walk quietly along Lyrebird walk between Coachwood picnic area and Bellbird campground and you might be lucky enough to see one of these birds putting on a display.

Some rare and threatened species that largely rely on these parks are koala, spotted-tailed quoll (a cat-like marsupial), parma wallaby, the rabbit-sized rufous bettong, the long-nosed potoroo and the common dunnart (a mouse-sized insect eater).

These parks also support a large variety of amphibians and reptiles which rely on the diverse habitats to survive.



Superb lyrebird. Brian Ralphs



Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage

In 1986, the importance of rainforests within Washpool and Gibraltar Range National Parks was recognised by inclusion in the World Heritage listing of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia. A series of reserves stretching from south east Queensland to Barrington Tops in New South Wales, these remnant rainforests protect thousands of special plants and animals and give a glimpse of what the planet was like millions of years ago.



Coombadjha nature stroll. Leah Pippos

Gibraltar Range and Washpool National Parks

Waking up in nature

Book for your campground online at nationalparks.nsw.gov.au or call 1300 072 757.

Mulligans offers vehicle based tent sites with a limited number of sites suitable for medium sized (up to 6m) caravans and a walk in group campground.

Gibraltar House is a comfortable base from which to explore Gibraltar Range and neighbouring national parks. It sleeps seven and is fully equipped with toilet, shower, full kitchen and a wood heater.

Boundary Falls offers a large open campground which can accommodate large groups and caravans over 6 metres. It has picnic tables and fireplaces.

Coombadjha is situated in a grass clearing next to Coombadjha Creek. It is a walk-in campground and has access to a toilet.

Bellbird is situated in the rainforest and has camping sites for individuals, small groups and small (up to 4 metres) caravans. Facilities include toilets, gas barbecues, picnic tables and fireplaces.

Grassy Creek is a very basic bush camping area on the World Heritage walk and has no facilities.

Four Bulls Hut offers a remote accommodation experience in the north west part of Washpool National Park. It sleeps six and is perfect to escape the busyness of life.



Mulligans Weir. Koen Dijkstra



Murrumbooee cascades walk. Robert Cleary/DPIE

1. The Needles walk



Grade 3: medium

Distance: 6km return, 2.5 hours

Starting at Mulligans Hut this walk crosses the Little Dandahra creek near one of the weirs built by William Mulligan in the 1920s. The poor granite soils support a dry forest of New England blackbutt with a thick undergrowth of bush peas, hakeas, banksias and grasstrees. The forest changes to rainforest as the track steadily rises to a view of six granite columns rising 80m above the edge of a steep-sided valley dropping into the Little Dandahra Creek. This walk can be combined with the Tree Fern Forest walk.

2. Little Dandahra Creek walk



Grade 3: easy to medium

Distance: 13km return, 4 hours

Linking Dandahra picnic area on the highway and Mulligans picnic area, this walk follows the Little Dandahra Creek past wildflowers, grasstrees and interesting rock formations. Around dusk and dawn, look for platypus foraging in the creek.

3. Tree Fern Forest walk



Grade 3: medium

Distance: 8km return, 3 hours

This loop track starting from Mulligans picnic area passes through rainforest and emerges in a wonderful

60m high wet forest of Sydney blue gums and tree ferns. The track then rises through open eucalypt forest and heathlands, passing rocky outcrops and spectacular cascades as it returns along Little Dandahra Creek to Mulligans campground.

4. Murrumbooee Cascades walk



Grade 3: medium

Distance: 6km return, 2.5 hours

This walk begins at Mulligans Hut and passes through wet eucalypt forest and then rainforest, to end on the banks of Dandahra Creek. Here, it narrows to form the Murrumbooee Cascades before the creek plunges over the edge of the escarpment. This is the site of Mulligan's second weir, built in the 1920s to measure water flow for his proposed hydro-electric scheme.

5. Dandahra Falls walk



Grade 4: difficult

Distance: 6km return, 3.5 hours

Starting at Mulligans Hut, first follow Murrumbooee Cascades walk through dry open forest and rainforest before scrambling down to a natural viewing area giving spectacular views of Dandahra Falls as they drop over the edge of the escarpment. Recommended for experienced walkers only.

6. Anvil Rock walk



Grade 3: medium

Distance: 4km return, 1.5 hours

Commencing off Mulligans Drive, walk beside hanging swamps, grass trees, waratahs and around granite boulders to the base of Anvil Rock. Anvil Rock itself sits atop the mound and cannot be climbed, but rock formations like Old Mans Hat are part of the spectacular view.

7. Dandahra Crags walk



Grade 4: medium to steep

Distance: 6km circuit/return, 2.5 hours

Beautiful summer wildflower displays guide walkers past Surveyors Creek swamp to the base of this granite outcrop. Confident climbers can get onto

Dandahra Crags for great views towards Raspberry Lookout and the Mann River valley. Complete the loop walk along the northern side of the swamp.

8. Lyrebird Falls walk



Grade 3: easy

Distance: 2.2km return, 1.5 hours

Starting and finishing at Boundary Falls picnic area, this return walk meanders along tall forest trails and ends at Lyrebird Falls viewing area. Enjoy breathtaking views of Boundary Creek as it makes its way downstream to the Timbarra River.

9. Duffer Falls walk



Grade 4: medium

Distance: 7km return, 3 hours

This walk starts at the site of Wades Sawmill at the Boundary Falls campground and takes you to where Duffer Creek cascades over the cliff to join Boundary Creek as it makes its way along the Demon Fault line.

10. Coombadjha nature stroll



Grade 2: easy

Distance: 800m return, 1 hour

Commence at Coachwood picnic area. Coachwood trees dominate this paved, assisted wheelchair accessible walking track to a small swimming hole in Coombadjha Creek. Learn about features of the rainforest along the way. Alternative return via Coombadjha Creek circuit.

11. Washpool walk



Grade 3: medium

Distance: 8.5km circuit, 3-4 hours

This iconic walk begins deep in the rainforest at the Coombadjha campground. See giant red cedars and strangler figs as you climb through the subtropical rainforest, before traversing wet and dry sclerophyll forest with views across the rainforest gully. Cross Cedar Creek as you re-enter rainforest and follow the gentle return ascent along Coombadjha Creek.

12. The Haystack route

Grade 5: difficult



Distance: 14km return, 5 hours

Follow the World Heritage walk from Boundary Falls picnic area. Although there is no designated path to the summit of this impressive rock formation it can be approached from the south by following the contour to its base. A 30 minute scramble past native holly, rock orchids and trigger plants will reward you with a view of Waratah Trig to the east, Old Mans Hat to the south-east and the Demon Fault to the north-west.

13. Junction Spur route

Grade 5: difficult



Distance: 8km return, 5 hours

Diverge from the Dandahra Falls walk and follow the spur between Little Dandahra and Dandahra Creeks to their junction. Navigation skills required. Recommended for experienced walkers only.

Picnic areas

Picnic areas are provided throughout the parks so you can stop and enjoy the scenery, have a picnic, or set off on one of the parks' many short walks.

Washpool National Park includes Coachwood and Granite picnic areas.

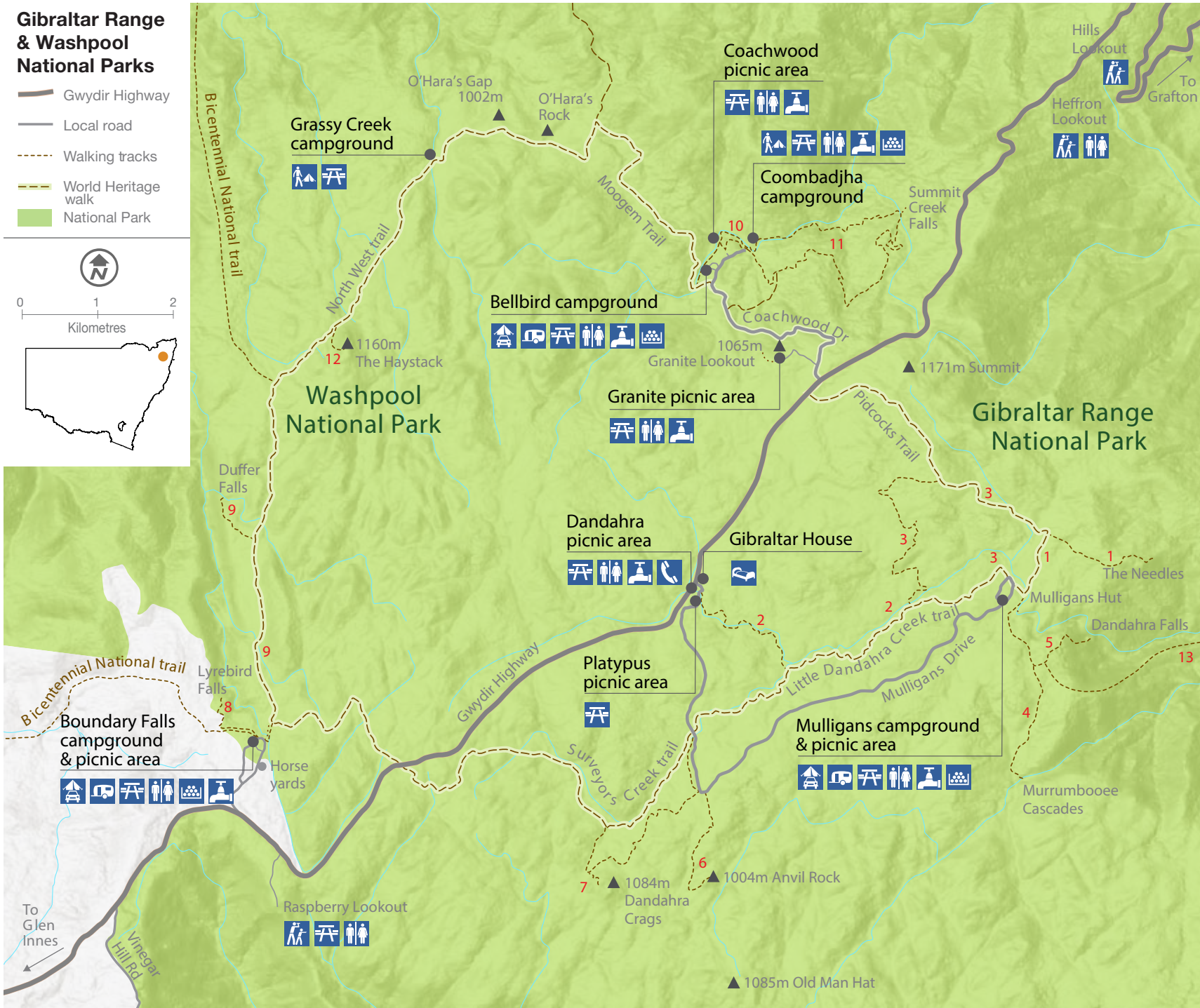
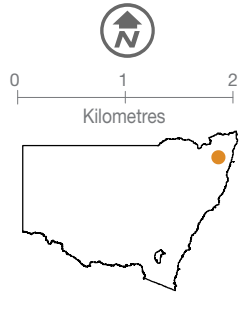
Gibraltar Range National Park includes Mulligans, Boundary Falls, Platypus and Dandahra picnic areas, and Raspberry Lookout.



Picnickers at Mulligans. DPIE

Gibraltar Range & Washpool National Parks

- Gwydir Highway
- Local road
- Walking tracks
- World Heritage walk
- National Park



Anvil Rock walk. Koen Dijkstra.



The Needles walk, Gibraltar Range National Park. Leah Pippos.

Mann River Nature Reserve

Waking up in nature

A peaceful riverside campground which is ideal for families. Facilities include a toilet and fireplaces. Firewood is provided however drinking water is not.

Mann River Nature Reserve offers basic picnic facilities.



Mann River campground and picnic area. John Spencer/DPIE

Tommys Rock lookout and walking track



Grade 4: difficult

Distance: 8km return, allow 3 hours. Follow the Narrow Pass 4WD trail.



Tommys Rock lookout. John Spencer/DPIE

Staying safe in parks

These national parks are remote and rugged places, weather can change quickly and conditions in the bush may be unpredictable.

When visiting these parks, be aware of the risks and take responsibility for your own safety and the safety of any children in your care. Leeches may be present in these parks and phone reception is limited.

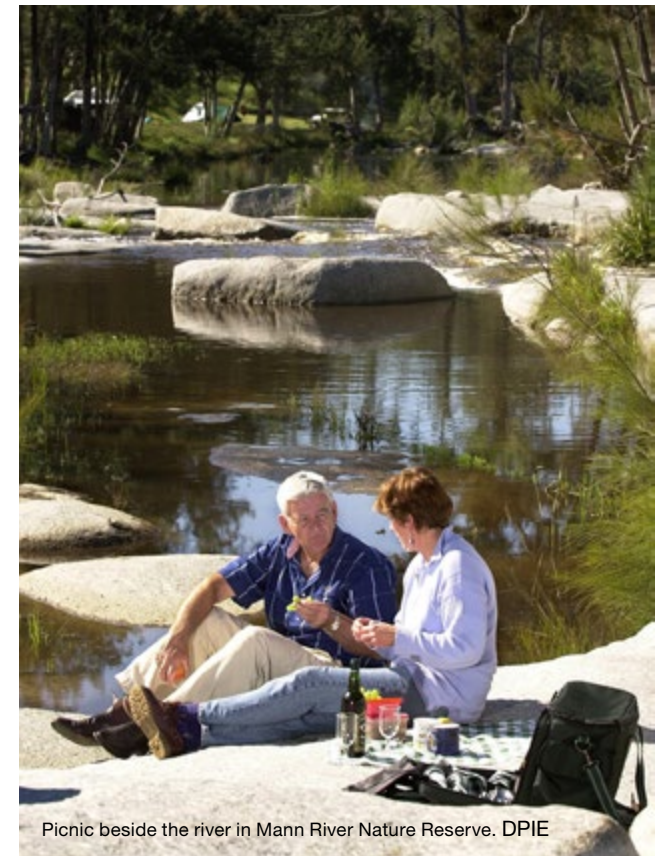
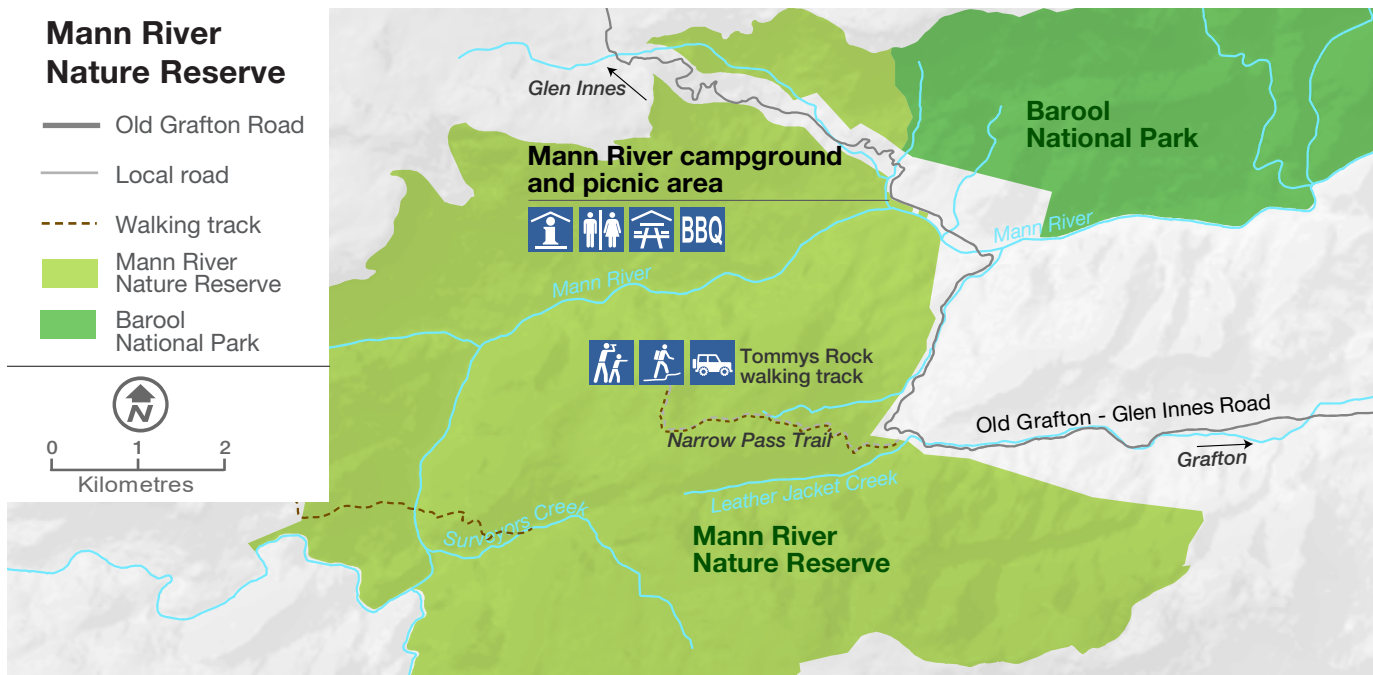
Remember to plan, choose your walks and activities to match your fitness level and tell someone where you're going and when you'll be back. For more information on staying safe in parks visit nswparks.info/safety.

Mann River Nature Reserve

- Old Grafton Road
- Local road
- - - Walking track
- Mann River Nature Reserve
- Barool National Park



0 1 2
Kilometres



Picnic beside the river in Mann River Nature Reserve. DPIE

Butterleaf National Park

Waking up in nature


There are no facilities in Butterleaf National Park. The open grassy area of the campground is suitable for self-reliant campers or a picnic.

Butterleaf walk

 **Grade 3:** medium
Distance: 12.5km circuit allow 5 hours

Starting at the car park this circuit follows rarely-used vehicle trails through a variety of superb forests. Keep an eye out for wombat tracks and their square droppings.

Mount Scott walk

 **Grade 4:** medium
Distance: 8km return, allow 3 hours

The walk passes through low heath and forests of stringybark and blackbutt trees and ends with a rocky scramble to the viewing points on Mount Scott.

Cycling

Vehicle tracks within Butterleaf NP are suitable for cycling. Please consider walkers and the environment when on your push bike.

Look after the parks

The protection of our natural environment and cultural heritage depends on the cooperation of all who visit and enjoy national parks. Here are a few ways you can help:

- Firewood collection is not permitted in the park. Campers should bring it with them or use gas BBQs. No chainsaws.
- Drive on formed roads only.
- Walking tracks are there to show you the way and to reduce your impact on the environment.
- All flora and fauna are protected.
- Please take your rubbish with you when you leave
- Take care around Aboriginal sites, places of cultural significance and other protected areas.
- Observe any fire bans that are in place

More information

Visit nswparks.info or call 1300 072 757 (13000 PARKS)

Download the [NSW National Parks](#) app for guides and maps and the [NPWS Self guided tours](#) app



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