

World Heritage Rainforests



Mount Banda Banda, Willi Willi NP

Werrikimbe and Willi Willi national parks form an extensive mountain wilderness on a spectacular section of the Great Divide and the Eastern Escarpment, high in the mountains, just 60 km west of the mid north coast of New South Wales. The parks protect some of the best sub-tropical, warm temperate and cool temperate rainforests in Australia and most of Werrikimbe, and the Banda Banda section of Willi Willi, is included as

part of the Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia (CERRA), one of Australia's sixteen World Heritage properties.

Today's rainforests are direct relations of the ancient forests of Gondwana, when parts of what is now Australia lay to the south, within the Antarctic Circle. About 80 million years ago, the ancestral continent broke up and Australia started moving north, which eventually reduced most of the cool-adapted Gondwanan rainforests to a narrow strip along the escarpment of south-eastern Australia. These are places with high conservation and landscape values, an outstanding array of biodiversity and magnificent scenery.

As well as World Heritage rainforests, the parks in this brochure protect a diversity of vegetation communities, including sub-alpine woodland, upland heaths and old growth eucalypt forests. This diverse vegetation supports a wide range of fauna, with small ground mammals and bats, the endangered Hastings River Mouse, the Yellow-bellied Glider, as well as Australia's largest marsupial carnivore, the Spotted-tailed Quoll.



Hastings River Mouse

The Great Escarpment

The grandeur of these parks comes from their location along part of the Great Eastern Escarpment, which runs the length of eastern Australia, from Victoria to north Queensland. The escarpment is the name given to the steep drop at the eastern edge of the Great Divide (the watershed separating drainage to the Pacific Ocean from that going west). The escarpment began to be formed after Gondwana broke up and ancient seabeds were up-lifted to create the mountainous high country of the Dividing Range. Erosion by wind, rain, storms and local winter ice over millions of years carved out the undulating plateau, while rivers cut back the edge of the plateau, creating deep gorges that merged to form one continuous escarpment, now seen as a maze of cliffs, gorges, waterfalls, ridges, spurs, hills and valleys. The scarp is slowly moving west and this can be seen in the active erosion of steep cliffs at places like Apsley and Tia Gorges, just off the Oxley Highway east of Walcha.



The Great Escarpment looking north from Mount Banda Banda



Werrikimbe & Willi Willi National Parks

Werrikimbe National Park
(33 292 ha, declared 1975)

Werrikimbe was one of the first high country rainforest parks to be reserved in NSW and is now a World Heritage site, in recognition of the diversity of cool temperate, warm temperate and sub-tropical rainforests, as well as large tracts of old growth eucalypt forest, sedge and heath lands, sub-alpine woodland, upland swamps and historic sites. Most of the Park is declared wilderness and is an ideal escape from the crowds, offering solitude and self-reliant bush walking. There are four visitor areas with basic facilities – two on the eastern side near the edge of the escarpment, and two on the west, on the plateau. The Park reflects the landscape, flora and fauna of both the Great Escarpment and the Northern Tablelands.



Kemps Pinnacle looking east to the coast

Willi Willi National Park
(29 870 ha, declared 1996)

This rainforest mountain park lies just to the east of Oxley Wild Rivers and Werrikimbe national parks, and includes a spectacular section of the Great Eastern Escarpment from Mount Banda Banda (1258 m) to Double Head Mountain (1075 m). The ridges and spurs here separate the Macleay and Hastings valleys and include Kems Pinnacle (1152 m), a site of Aboriginal significance. This is a landscape characterised by deeply dissected and forested valleys and most of the Park is declared wilderness. A delightful visitor area is located on the picturesque Wilson River, deep in the forest, where there is a choice of three walking tracks through sub-tropical and warm temperate rainforest, along the river, and to a sparkling waterfall and plunge pool.

Neighbouring Parks
Carrai National Park & Carrai State Conservation Area
(14 860 ha, declared 1999)

A remote and isolated park high on the Carrai Plateau and the steep ridges of Kunderang Brook and the Macleay River. There are no facilities, however the Park provides access to Marys View, with magnificent views across the Macleay Gorges above East Kunderang Homestead. Access is via Coachwood and Carrai roads (4WD essential).

Oxley Wild Rivers National Park
(126 910 ha, declared 1986)

With the largest area of dry rainforest in Australia, Oxley Wild Rivers is also part of the CERRA World Heritage group. The Park is famous for high waterfalls and dramatic gorges (Wollomombi,

Dangars, Apsley, Tia, etc), scenic views over the Great Escarpment, extensive wilderness and some interesting cultural sites. The Bicentennial National Trail passes through the Park and is suitable for trekking and horse riding. Bush walking is possible on a number of routes through the gorges. More information on this park can be found in the Waterfall Way and Oxley Highway brochures.

Kumbatine National Park & Kumbatine State Conservation Area
(16 588 ha, declared 1999)

These parks protect dry and moist eucalypt forests along the ridges of the Cooperabung Range, with rainforest patches in the cooler shaded gullies. The range forms a watershed between the Macleay and Wilson rivers and is an important wildlife corridor between the coast and the mountains. Part of the Park lies on a narrow bed of Carboniferous limestone extending into the mountains and including the caves in Yessabah, Willi Willi Caves and The Castles nature reserves. Remains of lime kilns date from the convict era when lime was extracted for mortar in buildings at Port Macquarie and was also taken to Sydney.



Macleay Gorges Wilderness Area, from Marys View

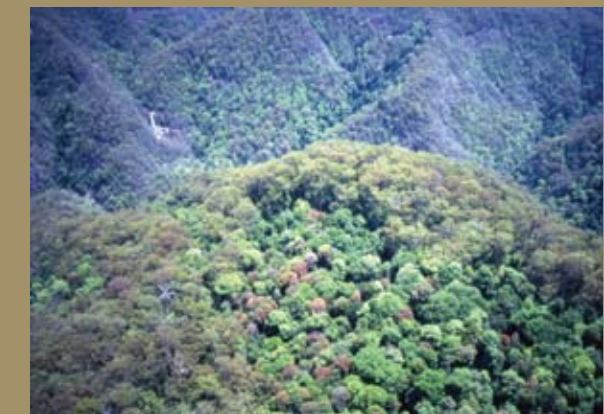
World Heritage

The World Heritage Convention protects the world's special natural and cultural places. Sites on the List include:

- Mount Everest, Nepal
- Grand Canyon, USA
- Great Wall of China
- Kakadu National Park, Australia
- Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park, Australia
- The Tasmanian Wilderness, Australia
- Fraser Island, Australia
- The Great Barrier Reef

The Central Eastern Rainforest Reserves of Australia (CERRA) are a series of rainforest parks and reserves extending from Barrington Tops to south-east Queensland. Most of Werrikimbe, Oxley Wild Rivers, and part of Willi Willi national parks, as well as The Castles and Mt Seaview nature reserves, are included in the CERRA World Heritage group.

Most of Werrikimbe, Oxley Wild Rivers, and much of Willi Willi national parks is declared wilderness – large areas of natural land essentially unchanged by human activity. Wilderness contributes to the protection of biodiversity and provides opportunities for self-reliant recreation.



Rainforest, Mount Werrikimbe

More information

NPWS Mid North Coast Region
152 Horton Street
Port Macquarie 6586 8300

NPWS Macleay Area
Cardwell Street
Arakoon 6566 6621

NPWS Hastings Area
22 Blackbutt Road
Port Macquarie 6588 5555


NPWS Walcha Area
188W North Street
Walcha 6777 4700

Kempsey Visitors Centre
Pacific Highway 6563 1555
Freecall 1800 642 480

Port Macquarie Visitors Centre
30 Clarence Street 6581 8000

General inquiries

1300 36 1967 or email info@environment.nsw.gov.au
Visit the national parks website:
www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au



Department of
Environment and
Conservation NSW

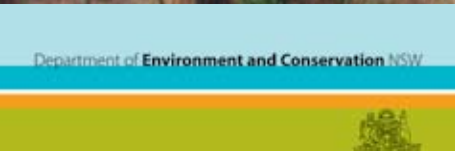
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our environment it's a living thing

MID NORTH COAST REGION

Werrikimbe & Willi Willi National Parks



Werrikimbe National Park

Brushy Mountain Camping Area

This area offers a tranquil setting amid tall gum trees with active bird life, and is a great place to camp. Walking tracks lead through rainforests and old growth eucalypts. Spokes Lookout provides views across Willi Willi National Park to the coast. There is a large shelter shed, picnic tables, barbecues, toilets and campsites.

Grass Tree Picnic Area

This area has now been closed due to the Phytophthora control program.

Plateau Beech Camping Area

Surrounded by ancient Gondwanan rainforest, this visitor area has a large shelter shed with picnic tables, and bush camping is permitted on the grassy slopes in a quiet grassy clearing. A delightful walking track meanders through Antarctic Beech forest past two small waterfalls.

Mooraback Camping Area

Mooraback is on the western side of Werrikimbe and was once used for grazing, the grass here

attracting an abundance of grey kangaroos. Campsites are provided, with picnic tables, barbecues and toilets.

Cobcroft Picnic Area

Cobcroft is 15 km south of Mooraback, and is for day use. The Carabeen loop walk starts here, as well as the longer self-reliant bush walk along the Mesa management trail to the Hastings River gorge.



Brushy Mountain



Plateau Beech



Walking in the parks

Werrikimbe National Park

Scrub-bird Walk, 9 km return, moderate

This track winds through rainforest, just back from the edge of the escarpment, from Brushy Mountain to Spokes Lookout where grand views can be seen to the coast. Return along the track, or down Spokes Trail which leads to the road, then to the camping area.

Loop Walk, 2.9 km, easy

This short walk links Brushy Mountain with Grass Tree, passing through cool temperate rainforest.

King Fern Walk, Plateau Beech, 2 km, easy

This loop walk leads through cool temperate Antarctic Beech and Coachwood rainforest, past two waterfalls. Constructed in 1986, at the time of the original World Heritage listing, it is one of the classic walks of the Mid North Coast Region – a really good walk to experience CERRA rainforest!

Platypus Pools Walk, Mooraback, 5 km, moderate

This loop walk crosses cleared country and open eucalypt forest. Large mobs of eastern grey kangaroos are regularly seen and the pools have good populations of the elusive platypus.

Carabeen Walk, 1.5 km, easy

This short loop walk passes through warm temperate rainforest where Yellow Carabeen trees can be seen, identifiable by their large buttress roots.

Willi Willi National Park

Palm Grove Walk, 1 km return, easy

This leads from the Wilson River Picnic Area through sub-tropical rainforest and blue gums to the Glade Picnic Area beside the Wilson River. Return through the rainforest or along the road.

Botanic Walk, 300m loop, easy

Learn the names of some rainforest trees and ferns on this short stroll across the Wilson River from the picnic area.



Cascades, Loop Walk



King Fern Falls, Plateau Beech



Palm Grove Walk, Wilson River



Upper Falls, Hastings River



Mooraback, Werrikimbe NP



Wilson River Picnic Area, Willi Willi NP



Youdales Hut, Oxley Wild Rivers NP

Willi Willi National Park

Wilson River Picnic Area

Cedar getters came to this secluded site beside the river in the 1890s. Although much of the red cedar was felled, a few of these iconic trees remain. The forest here is very high quality and was set aside by the Forestry Commission in 1953 as a Forest Preserve Primitive Area. Picnic facilities were installed in the 1960s and it became a popular destination for visitors and school groups. There are two picnic shelters, barbecues, toilets and three walking tracks.



Waterfall near Wilson River Picnic Area



Oxley Wild Rivers National Park

Youdales Hut

This pioneer's hut is a good destination for 4WD trips exploring the rugged mountain wilderness. The hut itself is not used, however there are six camp sites beside Kunderang Brook. Numbers are limited for both day use and camping, and bookings are essential for a key to the gate, through the Walcha NPWS office or Aspley Motors in Walcha, phone 6777 2755. Walcha is 96km away, via Mooraback Road, Kangaroo Flat Road and the Oxley Highway.



View from Spokes Lookout

When four wheel driving in national parks, please follow these tips:

- Stay on the road. Going off-road causes damage and can result in areas being closed for restoration.
- Look after trees by not attaching ropes, driving nails or chopping them.
- If in doubt, get out and assess the situation. It saves a lot of trouble and allows you to make the best decision.
- Report accidents, wild fires, injured wildlife and illegal activities. If you see something suspicious,

Getting there

Werrikimbe and Willi Willi national parks are located 400 km north of Sydney, in the mountain ranges between Armidale and Port Macquarie. From the Pacific Highway a circuit route is possible, starting at either Wauchope or Kempsey. 4WD is recommended (or a sturdy two-wheel-drive). Be sure to check road conditions and be prepared to turn back if a tree fall blocks the road. Expect gravel with sharp bends, steep stretches and occasional logging trucks coming from state forests on the lower sections.

Hastings Forest Way

From Wauchope, Hastings Forest Way climbs from 100 metres above sea level to 1100 metres near Spokes Mountain in Werrikimbe National Park. For a rewarding view, take a side-trip up to Number 1 Tower Picnic Area in Bellangry State Forest at Five Ways junction, where the track to Cobrabald on the Wilson River in Mount Boss State Forest also turns off the main road.

Wilson River Picnic Area in Willi Willi National Park is 14 km further on, turn right (north) for a further 6 km down to the river. Banda Banda Arboretum lies on the escarpment high up in Willi Willi National Park, 11 km on from the Wilson River turn-off. (There are no visitor facilities here, however a walk along the track through the rainforest is possible).

At the junction 4 km above the Banda Banda turn-off, continue on for Brushy Mountain Camping Area or turn left for Plateau Beech Camping Area, both in Werrikimbe National Park. From Plateau Beech it is

possible to return south to the Oxley Highway, however check with offices listed on the back for the condition of a dangerous bridge across the Cockerawombeeba Creek.

Coachwood and Carrai Roads

The Forbes River crossing is 2 km on from Brushy Mountain and is impassible after rain. Another 2 km is the junction with Racecourse Trail to the left which heads west to the Youdales Hut gate in Oxley Wild Rivers National Park, then on to Mooraback in Werrikimbe National Park (24 km). Coachwood Road heads north-west (look out for Kemps Pinnacle on your right), to Kookaburra (23 km). From this junction, the Carrai Road to the left leads onto the Carrai Plateau to Mary's View; the road to the right takes you past McCoys Lookout, descends into the Macleay Valley, and joins the Armidale-Kempsey road at Toorooka near Willawarrin. Kempsey is about 35 km from here.



Hastings Forest Way in 1962

Aboriginal heritage

For thousands of years, the tablelands and nearby valleys were home to Aboriginal tribes, who probably migrated seasonally, with valley people moving to higher altitudes in summer and highlands groups visiting the valleys in winter. This environment provided foods such as wild

raspberries, lily bulbs, mushrooms, kangaroos, echidnas, eels, freshwater mussels, yabbies, fish and water fowl. While hunting and gathering, Aboriginal people were treading lightly on the landscape, although the extensive use of fire increased pressure on the rainforests, already retreating through warming and drying of the continent.

such as animal or bird trapping, deliberate destruction or arson, report it to the police or NPWS.

Some plants, grass trees and banksias in particular, have been affected by *Phytophthora*. This is caused by a spore living in the soil. Stay on the walking tracks and roads to avoid spreading this disease.

NPWS licences commercial operators for tours in the parks and reserves covered by this brochure. Activities may include bush walking, bird watching and tag-along 4WD tours. For more information please ring any of the numbers listed on the back of this brochure.



Werrikimbe Plateau
Around 1100 metres above sea level. Werrikimbe Plateau lies west of the Great Escarpment, on volcanic rock. Rainforests, eucalypt forests, montane heaths, grasslands and swamps.

Spokes Mountain
1230 metres
Located on the edge of the Great Escarpment, along the Kunderang Fault Line, where volcanic rock meets sedimentary rock. Great views to the coast across Willi Willi National Park.

Willi Willi NP

This rainforest mountain park lies along a section of the Great Eastern Escarpment on sedimentary rock – sandstone, siltstone, mudstone, limestone and conglomerate. Tall moist eucalypt forest and rainforest.

Mount Kippara, Kumbatine NP
340 metres
Sedimentary rocks and limestone. Open dry eucalypt forest on ridges, and rainforest in gullies.



West

This cross-section covers a distance of approximately 55 kilometres from west to east.

East

Kumbatine NP