

Explore

Blackall Range

Parks and forests

The scenic Blackall Range is a landscape created by volcanoes and sculpted by water over millions of years, and it's only half an hour's drive from the Sunshine Coast.

Rich basalt soils, a result of volcanic activity around 30 million years ago, support warm subtropical rainforest. Tall open forests grow on poorer quality rhyolitic soils derived from a violent volcanic period that began 235 million years ago.

On the edge of the escarpment waterfalls cascade all year round — thundering and spectacular during the summer rainfall season, then dropping to a gentle trickle in drier winter months.

Mapleton Falls and Kondalilla National Parks, Mapleton Forest Reserve, Delicia Road Conservation Park and other small reserves protect Blackall Range's remnant forest communities, provide essential wildlife habitat and scenic places for nature-based recreation.



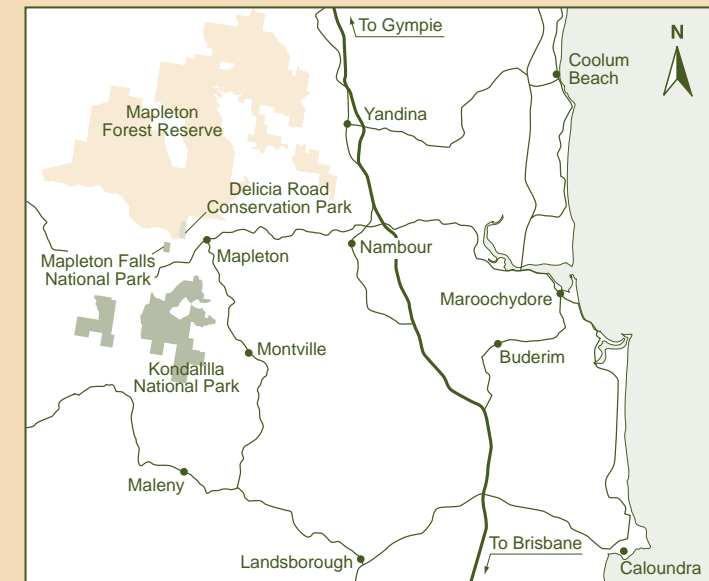
Australian brush-turkeys are often seen in the Blackall Range

Kondalilla Falls - rushing waters



Planning your visit

Kondalilla and Mapleton Falls are accessible by bitumen roads. Mapleton Forest Reserve and Delicia Road Conservation Park have gravel access roads suitable for conventional vehicles under normal conditions.



Weather

Always check weather conditions before your visit. Be aware that forest areas are hazardous during strong winds, as tree branches may fall.

After high rainfall, which occurs mostly in spring and summer, check park conditions with the QPWS Maleny office. During severe wet weather, some walking tracks flood and are closed for public safety.

Local temperatures can rise above 30°C in summer and drop to 0°C overnight in winter. Nights can be cool at any time of the year.

At a glance

QPWS day-use areas

Mapleton Falls National Park



A short walk leads to an open grassy picnic area.

Kondalilla National Park



A 50m downhill walk with steps leads to a large grassed picnic area.

Mapleton Forest Reserve



Small, shady picnic area beside the carpark.

Other day-use areas in natural settings managed by other agencies

Lake Baroon



Flat paths lead to day-use areas close to carparks.



Linda Garret circuit, Delicia Road Conservation Park

Bushwalks

Walking tracks and hiking trails help you explore a variety of forest types from rainforest to tall open forest. Choose walks that suit your fitness level. Wear sturdy shoes and protect yourself from the sun and biting insects with protective clothing, sunscreen and insect repellent. Carry sufficient food and water for your walk.

Use the walking track grade listed with each walking track description to choose walks suitable for your ability and fitness level.

Walking track grades



Class 2 track *Australian Standards*

- Easy level, well-graded track, suitable for all fitness levels.



Class 3 track *Australian Standards*

- Gently sloping, well-defined track with slight inclines or few steps.
- Caution needed on loose gravel surfaces and exposed natural lookouts.
- Reasonable level of fitness and ankle-supporting footwear required.



Class 4 track *Australian Standards*

- Distinct track, usually with steep exposed inclines or many steps.
- Caution needed on loose gravel surfaces and exposed natural outlooks.
- Moderate level of fitness and ankle-supporting footwear required.

Mapleton Falls National Park



Wompoo circuit 1.3km

Kondalilla National Park



Picnic Creek circuit 1.7km



Kondalilla Falls circuit 4.7km

Mapleton Forest Reserve



Pilularis forest walk 800m return



Bonyee walk 400m return

Delicia Road Conservation Park



Linda Garrett circuit 700m

Linking Blackall Range reserves



Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk 58km



Pilularis forest walk, Mapleton Forest Reserve

Take care

- **Stay on track.** Remain behind barriers at lookouts and waterfalls. For longer walks, tell a responsible person where you are going and when you expect to return.
- **Supervise children.** Natural areas have hazards that children are unfamiliar with including creeks, cliff edges and wildlife.
- **Take care near water.** Rock surfaces can be slippery. Never dive or jump into creeks or rock pools as they can be shallow or have submerged objects.
- **Carry a first aid kit.** Apply insect repellent to exposed skin and shoes to discourage mosquitoes, leeches and ticks.
- **Carry fresh water.** Drinking water is not provided. Creek water is unsuitable for drinking as it may contain organisms that can cause illness.
- **Take care with fire.** Bring your own clean milled firewood and use only constructed fireplaces. Never gather wood from the bush. Before you leave, make sure the fire is out — use water not sand or dirt. Preferably bring a fuel stove.
- **Never feed native animals.** Feeding wildlife upsets the balance of nature and can make animals sick and even aggressive towards humans.
- **Stay up to date.** Current information on park conditions can be found at www.derm.qld.gov.au, click on park alerts.



Mapleton Falls National Park

Riparian rainforest and open eucalypt forest communities are protected here. Pencil Creek forms Mapleton Falls, plunging 120m into the valley below. During warmer months listen for frogs in the pool beside the causeway. Take a close look at rocks around the pool and you'll see distinctive hexagonal shapes formed by volcanic activity 25 million years ago.

Mapleton Falls Lookout — Map reference 1



Next to the carpark, this lookout provides spectacular views of the waterfall and rainforest valley below. Look for Australian peregrine falcons, which often soar and roost near Mapleton Falls cliff edges during August and September. Views to the west overlook the Obi Obi Valley.



Wompoo circuit 1.3km Allow 45 minutes

This circuit track winds through rainforest and eucalypt forest. Wayside signs provide information about features.

Listen for the wompoo fruit-dove calling from its treetop feeding sites with a “wallock-a-woo” and “book-a-roo”.

Kondalilla National Park

Kondalilla, an Aboriginal word meaning rushing waters, describes this park's 90m waterfall feature during the summer wet season.

Above the falls, tall open eucalypt forest mingles with rainforest species in wetter areas. A drier forest grows on the western escarpment, featuring casuarinas with a grass tree understorey. Subtropical rainforest grows below the escarpment, where soil and aspect are suitable, and riparian rainforest lines the creek.

Kondalilla day-use area - Map reference 2



Bushwalks

Picnic Creek circuit 1.7km Allow 45 minutes to 1 hour

This easy walk crosses Picnic Creek (400m), passes through tall eucalypt forest and patches of wet sclerophyll — a mix of eucalypt and rainforest species. Enjoy views over the valley from a lookout point.

Kondalilla Falls circuit 4.7km Allow 2–3 hours

Follow the Picnic Creek circuit down the escarpment, past rock pools and a lookout with views of Kondalilla Falls. Walk through rainforest to the base of the waterfall and continue back up the ridge. Look for emergent bunya pines with their distinctive symmetrical dome shapes. Continue back up the escarpment to Picnic Creek circuit and back to the picnic area.

What goes down must come back up!

There are over 100 stairs on the Kondalilla Falls circuit so you need to be reasonably fit.



Always allow enough time to finish your walk in daylight hours.

Wet weather track closures



Walking tracks are closed during severe wet weather due to flooding of the tracks. For your safety, do not enter the park when closure signs are displayed.

If you are caught out on the tracks when creek crossings flood, do not attempt to cross them. Wait until the water no longer covers the track.

Water rises and falls in a short period of time. For example, in 1998 Kondalilla National Park was closed when 50mm fell in 15 minutes! Water rose rapidly, transforming the cascading creek into a fast flowing turbulent water mass. Bridges and creek crossings were cut by floodwaters and conditions were extremely dangerous. Within hours the water had dropped and the tracks were re-opened.

Forest roads — expect the unexpected!

Unsealed forest roads can be steep and winding.

- **Slow down.** Allow time to react to unexpected situations and changed conditions. You may encounter other drivers, cyclists, walkers and horse riders; and cattle and wildlife.
- **Be courteous.** Pull over to the left to allow vehicles to pass. Do not stop in the roadway — for photography and enjoying the scenery, find a safe place to pull over or turn around.
- **Watch out for curves and steep slopes.** Drive carefully around corners, especially after rain. Stay on your side of the road and avoid sudden slowing. Shift down a gear when roads are steep.
- **Wet roads.** If water covers the road, check water depth and road surface before crossing.
- **All road rules apply.** Obey speed limits. Always wear a seat belt. Never carry passengers outside the vehicle cabin.

Mapleton Forest Reserve

Mapleton Forest Reserve protects rainforest remnants with bunya pines, piccabeen palm groves, tall open blackbutt forests, scribbly gum forest and picturesque mountain scenery. Vehicle access is permitted along the Forest Drive, and Delicia, Buckby and Point Glorious Roads.

Mapleton day use area — Map reference 4



Tall blackbutt trees *Eucalyptus pilularis* dominate the forest in this area.



Pilularis forest walk 800m return

Allow 20 minutes

Walk through tall open forest with a ferns and shrubs covering the forest floor.



Bonyee walk 400m return — Map reference 5

Allow 10 minutes

This track is named using local Gubbi Gubbi language for bunya. The walk features a very large bunya pine, refreshing rainforest and a piccabeen palm grove.

Point Glorious day-use area — Map reference 6



Point Glorious, approximately 400m above sea level, provides spectacular views of the coast and hinterland. Scribbly gums and grass trees grow around the lookout.

Abseiling enthusiasts can apply their skills on the rhyolite bluffs. Anchor points are provided near the lookout. Do not interfere with fixed equipment on the cliff or anchor to trees or other structures.

Gheerulla camping area — Map reference 7



Three camping sites are provided in this small camping area beside Gheerulla Creek.

Gheerulla trail bike area — Map reference 8



About 26km of trail bike tracks are provided for licensed riders using registered motorcycles.

Delicia Road Conservation Park

This small park, adjoining Mapleton Forest Reserve, was generously donated by Linda Garrett in the late 1980s to Maroochy Shire Council and became a conservation park in 1994.



Linda Garrett circuit 700m — Map reference 3

Allow 20 minutes

Rainforest, a palm grove and tall wet eucalypt forest dominated by blackbutt, turpentine, brush box and flooded gum can be explored on this walk. The park is home to the great barred frog and is a site for continuing frog monitoring.

Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk

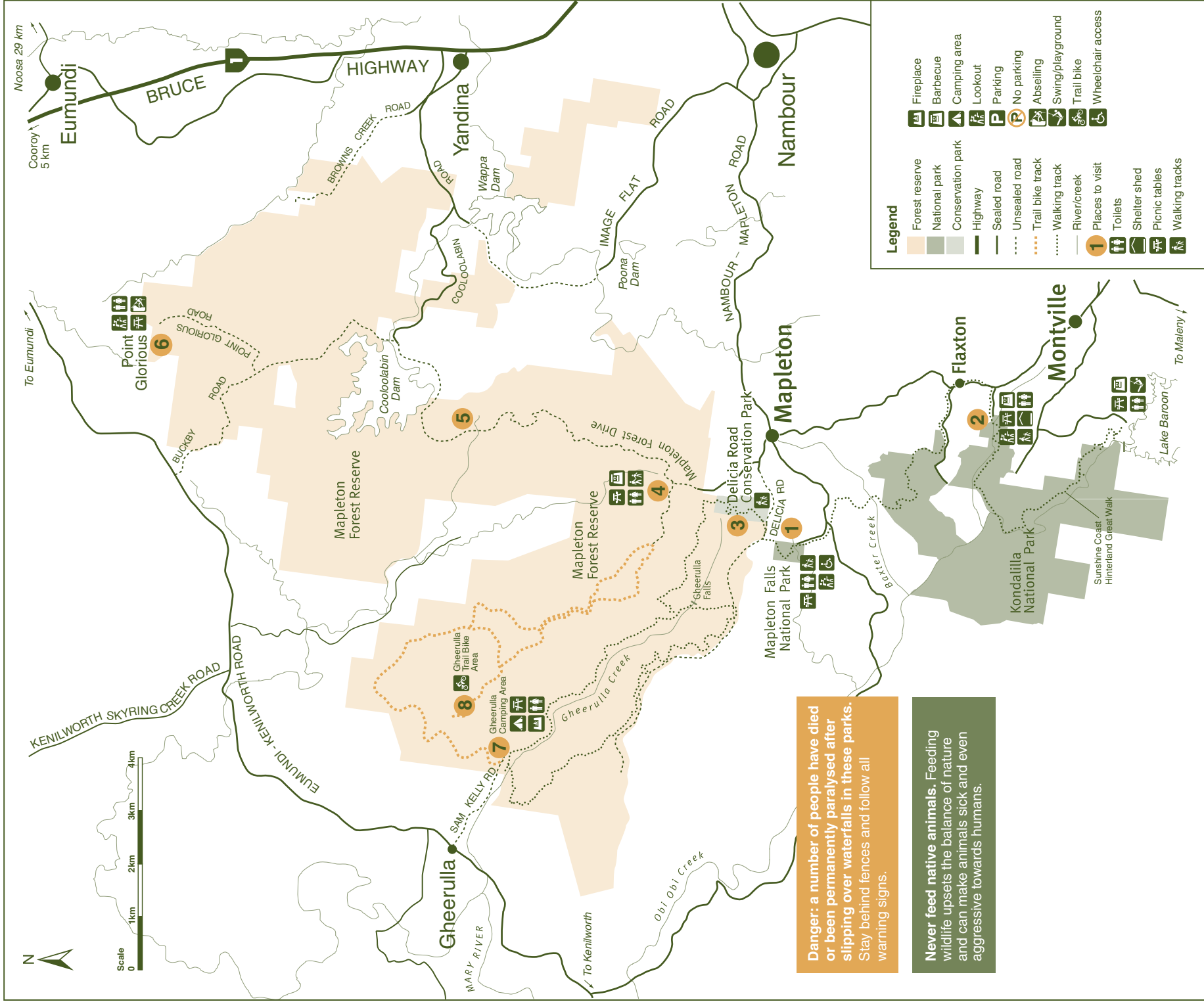


Scenic and spectacular waterfalls, valleys and gorges of Obi Obi, Baxter and Gheerulla Creeks feature on the 58km Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk. The walk is accessible from several locations and offers a diverse range of walking experiences from half-day walks to a four to six day walk with overnight camps.



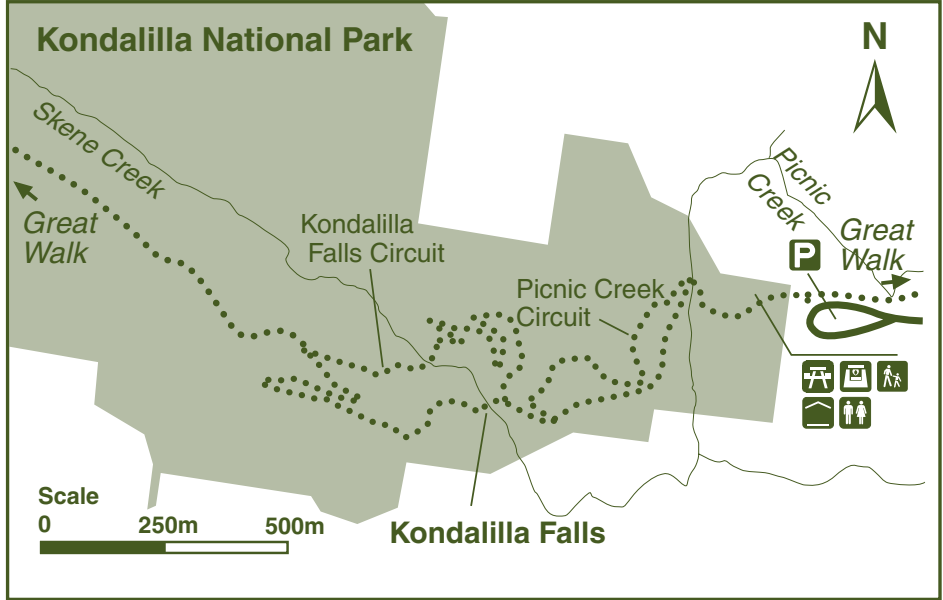
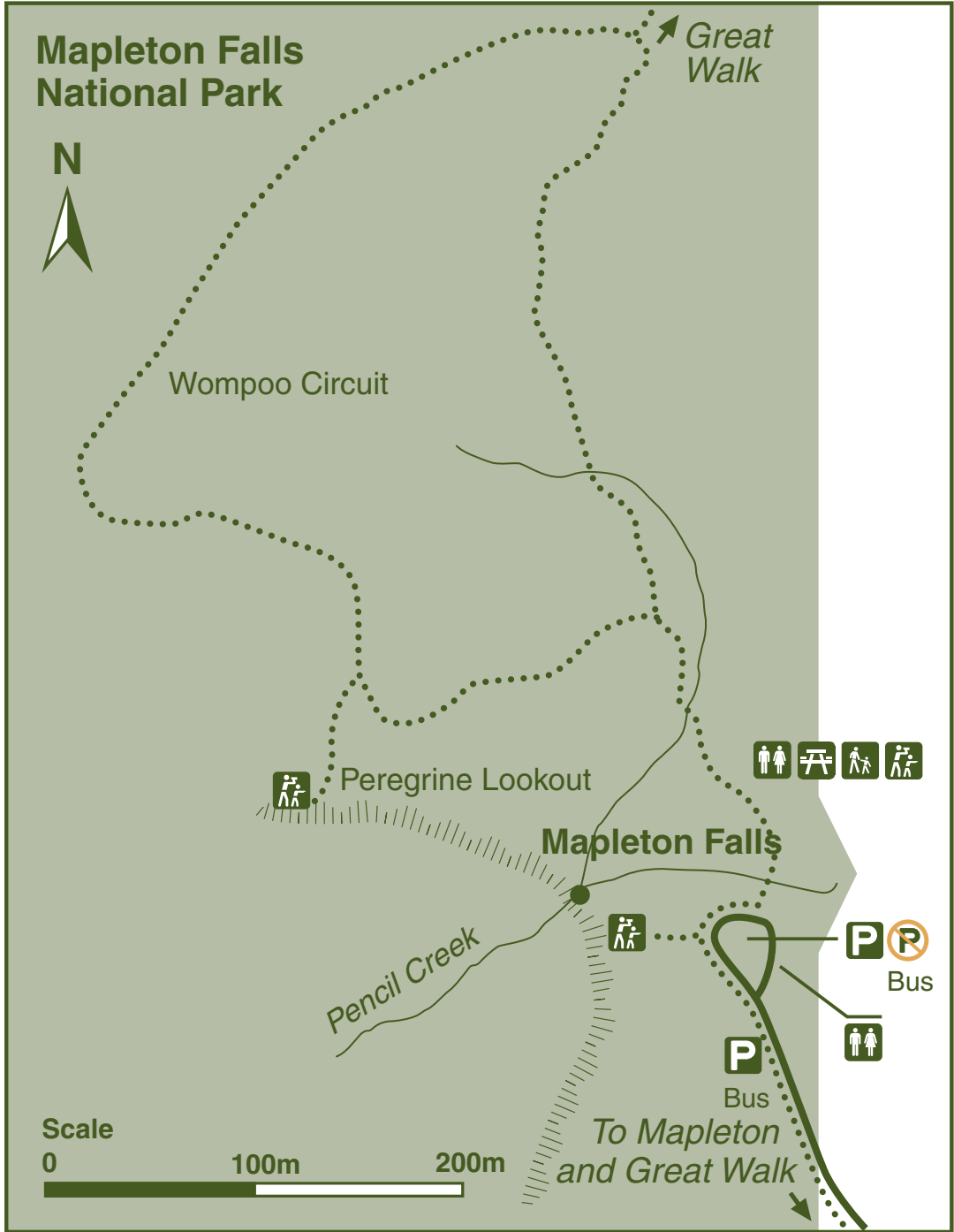
Purchase a copy of the Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk Topographic Map, which includes detailed track information from QPWS and tourism outlets and plan your walk carefully.

For further information and to book camping sites, visit us online at www.derm.qld.gov.au/greatwalks.



Danger: a number of people have died or been permanently paralysed after slipping over waterfalls in these parks.
Stay behind fences and follow all warning signs.

Never feed native animals. Feeding wildlife upsets the balance of nature and can make animals sick and even aggressive towards humans.



For further information

Visit us on-line at www.derm.qld.gov.au

Phone 1300 130 372

Camping

A small camping area is located beside Gheerulla Creek in Mapleton Forest Reserve. Three walkers' camps are provided along the Sunshine Coast Hinterland Great Walk.

You need to book your permits before you visit:

- on-line at www.qld.gov.au/camping
- by phone 13 13 04 (24 hours).

Larger camping areas are provided nearby at Conondale National Park and Imbil and Jimna State Forests.

Emergency contacts

Ambulance, non-urgent medical transport: **13 12 33**

Emergency: **000**

If you have difficulty connecting to **000** from your mobile phone try **112**

Indigenous Australian text: Thanks to Dr Eve Fesl, Gubbi Gubbi elder for sharing information and assisting with Indigenous Australian text preparation.

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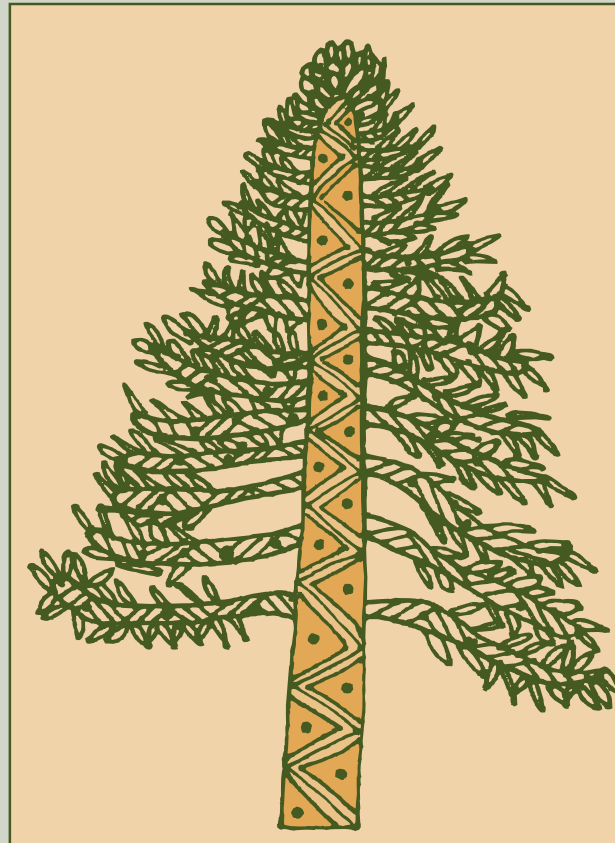
Living on the mountain

Bonyee Bunya festival

For countless generations, the Blackall Range has held spiritual significance for many Aboriginal people throughout south-east Queensland.

Abundant bunya pines growing throughout this area produced large nut crops providing enough food for huge gatherings. When the nut crop peaked every three years, Gubbi Gubbi and neighbouring Wakka Wakka people hosted the Bonyee Festival. Many invited guests travelled great distances from coastal and inland areas to share food, songs and dances, arrange marriages, and so on. A large grassy area near Baroon Pocket was an important gathering place.

Juvenile bonyee (bunya) pine artwork by Melinda Serico, a descendant of the Gubbi Gubbi People.



Skene's cutting, Montville — Flaxton Road, 1900

Pastoralists and timber-getters

From 1842 until 1860, the Blackall Range was part of a large reserve declared by Governor Gipps to protect the bunya pine food source for local Indigenous groups. It was illegal to settle or clear land where bunya pines occurred.

When reserve status was rescinded, pastoralists and timber-getters came. In the 1880s prized timber including red cedar, blackbutt and tallowwood was logged in the Blackall Range. The forest around Kondalilla was logged heavily and the ring-barked trees can still be seen today along the Picnic Creek circuit.

Back to nature

From the early 1900s, people began visiting this area for its natural scenery, waterfalls and spectacular views.

The first area to be protected was Kondalilla — in 1906 it became a recreational area, then national park in 1945. Since then, reserves have been added across the Blackall Range to protect remnants of its natural communities.

Caring for wildlife

Plant and animal diversity is high in this area, but habitat clearing and loss of vegetation along the range has threatened some species.

Healthy waterways are of vital importance for the well-being of wildlife and people. Many streams protected in reserves begin on private land. Careful land management is needed to keep the water clean and life sustaining.

Similarly, natural corridors of vegetation linking larger reserves are essential to minimise species isolation and maximise the genetic breeding pool: helping to avoid local extinction.

Some species that occur only in this local area are rare or vulnerable to extinction. Research and recovery plans are in place to give these species a chance to recover to healthy population levels.

Frog monitoring

Several frog monitoring sites are located across the Blackall Range as part of planned research and recovery efforts for vulnerable, rare and endangered species. Some frog species are found only along streams in the Blackall and Conondale ranges.

Rangers carrying out frog monitoring surveys.



The endangered gastric brooding frog *Rheobatrachus silus* has not been seen since 1981 and may be extinct.

At Baroon Pocket a boardwalk was built as part of the Great Walk to protect the habitat of rare hip-pocket frogs.

Cascade tree frogs have been increasing in numbers and have had their status downgraded from endangered to vulnerable — a step in the right direction!

Endangered fish

Mary River cod is an endangered species in the wild, occurring only in small isolated populations in the Mary River catchment, which includes Lake Baroon and Obi Obi Creek.

Government agencies and community groups have worked together on the Mary River cod's recovery plan. As part of this plan, you cannot take this fish from anywhere in the Mary River catchment. Populations are monitored and the restriction is reviewed every three years.

Help care for the environment!

All plants, animals and features of the forest environment are protected.

- Do not remove plants (living or dead), rocks or other materials.
- Stay on designated tracks.
- Take care with fires. Bring your own milled firewood. Only light fires where fireplaces are provided and never gather wood from the bush. Preferably bring a fuel stove.
- Take rubbish away with you for appropriate disposal.
- Protect streams from pollution — many animals that are sensitive to changes in water quality live there.

Front cover artwork: Great barred frog *Mixophyes fasciolatus* — during summer months this frog's loud "wark" calls can be heard and large tadpoles can be seen in mountain streams.

Blackall Range

Kondalilla and Mapleton Falls National Parks, Delicia Road Conservation Park, Mapleton Forest Reserve



Tall forests, diverse wildlife, cascading waterfalls and spectacular scenery