

Flinders Ranges National Park

Bunyeroo and Wilcolo Creeks Hike

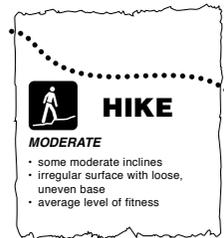


Healthy Parks
Healthy People



Bunyeroo and Wilcolo Creeks Hike

The rolling hills of the Bunyeroo Valley present a gentler face of the Flinders Ranges. Even though Bunyeroo Valley does not scale the heights of Wilpena Pound, it provides rewarding views of the peaks, making it an enjoyable outing for the whole family. The walking trail begins on the purplish shales and open cypress pine woodland of the Bunyeroo Formation and Wilcolo Creek. The trail then follows a small creek through the ABC Range (quartzite) to the gentle rolling country of Brachina Formation siltstones, characteristically vegetated with silver wattle. The return to the car park follows Bunyeroo Creek.



Self-guided Hike

This is a 9.2 kilometre loop hike which includes the short spur track to the lookout.

Allow 5 hours.

Altitude ranges from 290 metres at Checkpoint 1 to 490 metres at Checkpoint 5 (the hilltop lookout).

Access

The trailhead is at the Bunyeroo car park in Flinders Ranges National Park - 18 kilometres north of Wilpena along the Bunyeroo Gorge Road.

These notes correspond with the marked distances and provide for a clockwise or anti-clockwise circuit. The notes and checkpoints are sequenced for an anticlockwise circuit.

From the trailhead walk 150 metres south towards Bunyeroo Creek to Checkpoint 1.

Distance in kilometres to Checkpoint 1

9.2

Checkpoint 1 - Near a steel boom gate on the southern side of Bunyeroo Creek. Follow the service track that runs south along Wilcolo Creek.

Nearby, Bunyeroo Creek joins Wilcolo Creek and flows through the Heysen Range via Bunyeroo Gorge to the western plains.

8.3

Wilcolo Creek is quite wide at the section it can be crossed. Its catchment includes the small gorges that drain through the ABC Range between Checkpoints 3 and 4, and the Heysen Range which extends to the slopes below St Mary Peak and almost as far as Wilpena.

This leg of the route takes you over reddish Bunyeroo Formation shales. These are the softer sediments that have been eroded away between the hard quartzites of the ABC Range and the Heysen Range (to the west).

These shales are characterised by predominantly pine woodland. Other vegetation can be seen occasionally, including:

- Narrow-leaved hop-bush (*Dodonaea viscosa* var. *angustissima*) –purple hops
- Senna (*Senna artemisioides*) - yellow 'buttercup' flowers in late winter
- Clammy daisy-bush (*Olearia decurrens*) - small white daisies in March.
- Trees frame dramatic views of St Mary Peak and Wilpena Pound.

7.1

Checkpoint 2 - Track Junction.

Leave Wilcolo service track and follow the foot track to the east. The track descends the red shales to a flood terrace of Wilcolo Creek.

Distance in kilometres to Checkpoint 1 cont'd

6.7

Checkpoint 3 - West side of Wilcolo Creek.

Track junction with Heysen Trail - cross Wilcolo Creek.

A narrow gorge (a tributary of Wilcolo Creek) takes you through the ABC Range. It has huge river red gums, indicating deep water supplies.

Large blocks of the ABC Range Quartzite lie at the western end of the gorge. They are derived from coarse sands in the deltas of huge rivers that flowed out of landmasses to the west about 700 million years ago.

Grey ripple rock in the creek floor at the eastern end of the gorge creek is shale of the Brachina Formation. This was derived from fine-grained silts that were laid down before the coarse delta sands. The beach-like ripple rock is a reminder of the seas in which all these rocks had their origins.

5.8

East of the little gorge, the trail passes through white cypress pine woodland. It is easy to identify the oldest trees because they are the largest. They are the scattered parents of the dense, younger forest, where competing trees struggle to survive, and are spindly or dying.



Cypress pine
(*Callitris glaucophylla*),
sentinel of the ranges

4.8

Checkpoint 4 - Saddle.

Take a spur track south (200 metres) up to hilltop lookout.

Checkpoint 5

Take in the view. Start in the south where you can see (all bearings are magnetic):

- St Mary Peak 7 km 186 degrees
- Mt Abrupt 4.6 km 233 degrees

- Mt Sinnett 3.8 km 259 degrees
- Mt Rupert 5.0 km 331 degrees
- Hayward Bluff 14 km 353 degrees
- Patawarta (distant
dome shaped hill) 55 km 8 degrees
- Mt Sunderland 9 km 57 degrees

Return to Checkpoint 4 and continue downhill to the east.

As you walk towards Checkpoint 6, silver wattle begins to replace white cypress pine woodland.

4.4

Checkpoint 6 - Track Junction.

The old station track crosses Brachina Formation siltstones and sandstones.

You will see that the characteristic vegetation is:

- Silver wattle (*Acacia rivalis*)
– yellow flowers in winter and spring
- Corkbark (*Hakea ednieana*)
– pale cream flowers in spring
- Lemon grass (*Cymbopogon ambiguus*) – grey-green leaves and a lemon scent when bruised
- Elegant wattle (*Acacia victoriae*) – pale lemon flowers in October.

From time to time it is worth stopping to take in the view of Wilpena Pound to the south. Bunyeroo Creek can be identified by the large river red gums to the east.

2.4

Checkpoint 7 - Track and Creek Junctions.

Heysen Trail crosses Bunyeroo Creek.



Elegant Wattle
(*Acacia victoriae*)

The track crosses an open grassy shrubland of umbrella bush (*Acacia ligulata*) and bullock bush (*Alectryon oleifolius*). The slopes around the checkpoint above Bunyeroo Creek are infested with Horehound indicating that this was an area used heavily by stock.

2.2

Large river red gums line Bunyeroo Creek. The walking trail crosses Bunyeroo Creek via a rock slab, once on the other side of the creek the trail continues in a westerly direction (turn left).

2.0

On the southern side of the creek large tree roots wind down the cliff face, exploiting crevices in order to reach the creek water.

1.8

Cross to the southern side of Bunyeroo Creek. A blue creek marker can be seen on the opposite bank; turn right and follow the creek in a westerly direction.

1.6

Just beyond this marker pick your way across the creek near two large gum trees.

Checkpoint 8 - The walking trail meets Bunyeroo Gorge road.

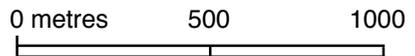
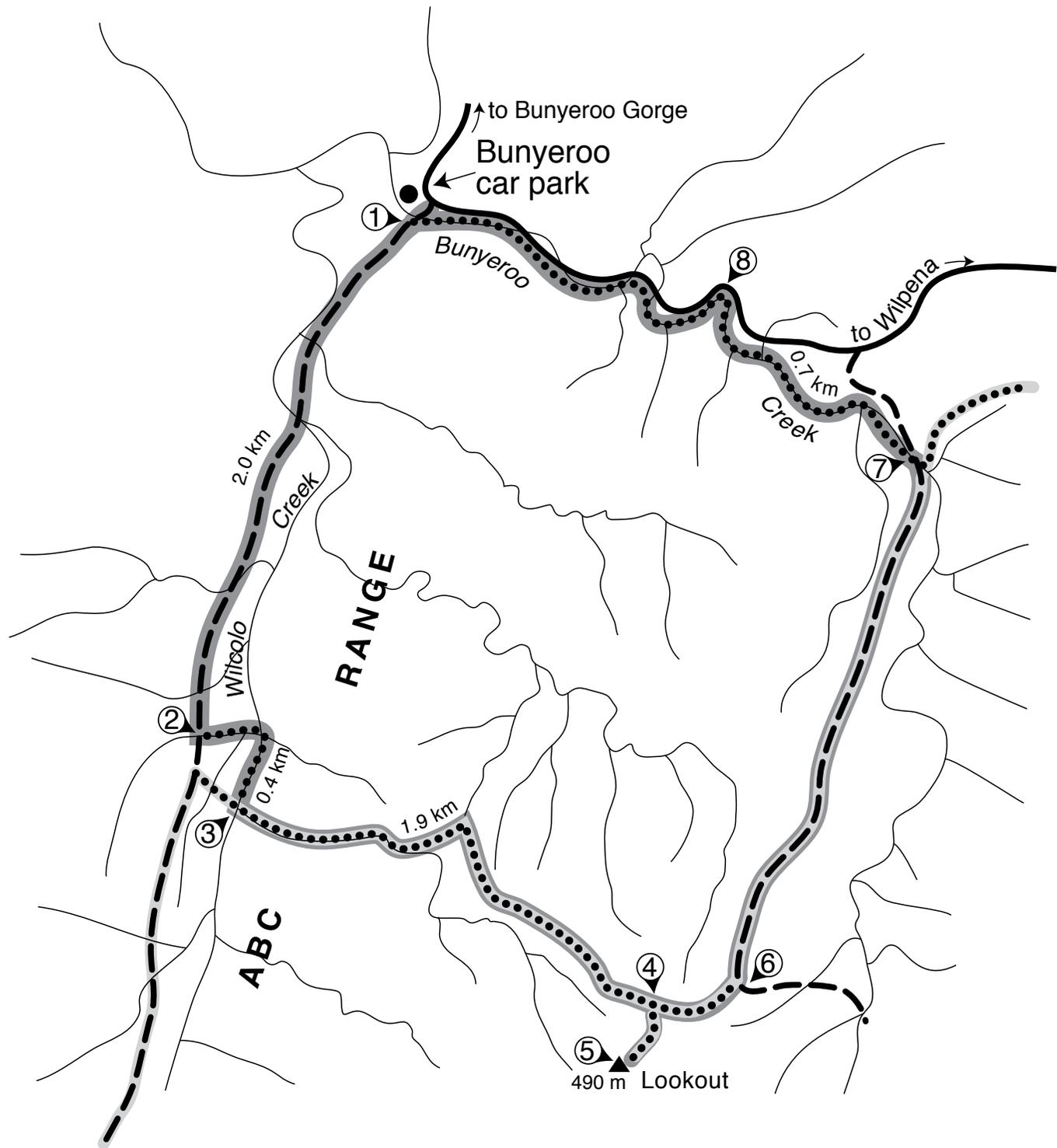
At this point the walking trail follows Bunyeroo Creek through the ABC Range. In wet seasons picking a dry route may be difficult. The catchment of Bunyeroo Creek, like that of Wilcolo Creek, extends almost as far as Wilpena, so it can carry substantial flows of water.

To ensure your safety and enjoyment continue walking through the gorge along the marked trail, staying clear of the road and vehicular traffic.

0.0

Checkpoint 1 - Near a steel boom gate on the south side of Bunyeroo Creek.

Return to Trailhead in car park.



-  Unsealed road
-  Fire access track
-  Walking trail
-  Bunyeroo and Wilcolo Creeks Hike
-  Heysen Trail
-  Watercourse
-  Checkpoint

Plant checklist for the walk

Bullock bush (*Alectryon oleifolius* ssp. *canescens*)

– olive-like tree.

Clammy daisy-bush (*Olearia decurrens*)

– small-white daisies that bloom in March.

Flinders Ranges corkwood

(*Hakea ednieana*)

– pale cream flowers in spring.

Cumbungi (*Typha* spp.)

– rush to 2 metres with brown cylindrical flower spikes.

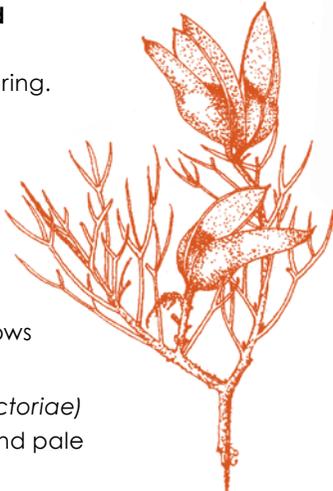
White cypress pine

(*Callitris glaucophylla*)

– cypress-like tree that grows to 15 metres.

Elegant Wattle (*Acacia victoriae*)

– shrub with spiny stems and pale lemon flowers in October.



Flinders Ranges Corkwood (*Hakea ednieana*), is near its southern limit at Bunyeroo

*Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*)

– a grey-green herb with woolly leaves and spikes of small white flowers.



Horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) is said to have been introduced to the pastoral country as a substitute for hops in the brewing of beer; now a problem weed sticking to both sheep fleeces and socks, by means which it is spread

Lemon-scented grass

(*Cymbopogon ambiguus*)

– grey-green leaves, lemon scented when bruised.

Narrow-leaved hop-bush

(*Dodonaea viscosa* ssp. *angustissima*)

– long narrow leaves, purple hops and blooms in spring.



Narrow-leaved Hop-bush (*Dodonaea viscosa* var. *angustissima*), there are several dodonaeas in the ranges quite unrelated to the hops used for making beer

Senna (*Senna artemisioides*)

– a shrub that grows to 1.5 metres with linear/broad leaflets and yellow 'buttercup' flowers which bloom in late winter.

Silver wattle

(*Acacia rivalis*)

– has yellow balls of flowers in winter and spring.

Umbrella bush

(*Acacia ligulata*)

– rounded bush.

* introduced species



River red gum

(*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)

– large tree to 20 metres with dappled white and grey bark which is coarse towards the base of the tree.

*Salvation Jane (*Echium plantagineum*)

– a rough-hairy herb with blue flowers in spring.

Sedges (*Cyperus*, mostly *gymnocaulos*)

– grass-like with star-shaped flower heads and grows to 0.5 metres.



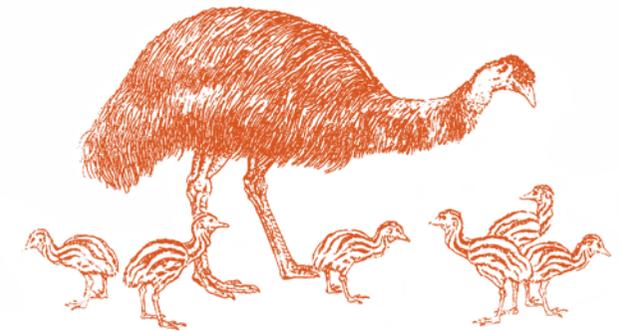
Silver wattle (*Acacia rivalis*) is confined to the northern and central Flinders Ranges; a parachute shaped bush

Walk safely



Be prepared when bushwalking:

- Wear sturdy shoes, hat and sunscreen.
- Carry sufficient drinking water. Do not rely on creeks in the park for drinking water.
- Keep to the defined trails.
- Inform a responsible person of your proposed route and expected time of return.
- Weather conditions can change quickly. Ensure you have appropriate wet-weather clothing.



Emus (*Dromaius novaehollandiae*) frequent grasslands and open woodlands

FLINDERS RANGES BUSH WALKS

These notes were first published by the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia as part of a series.

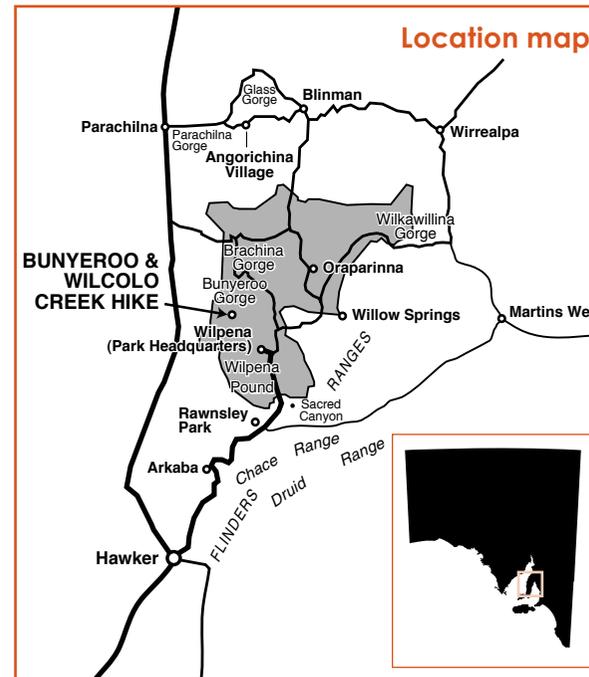
This and eleven other walks can be found with much other interesting information about the Flinders, in the Royal Geographical Society's book *Explore the Flinders Ranges*.

The National Parks Code

Help protect your national parks by following these guidelines:

- Leave your pets at home (1080 poison, lethal to pets, is used in the park to control foxes).
- Take your rubbish with you.
- Observe fire restrictions usually 1 November to 30 April. Check CFS hotline 1300 362 361. Gas fires only during this period.
- Conserve native habitat by using liquid fuel or gas stoves.
- Camp only in designated areas.
- Respect geological, cultural and heritage sites.
- Keep wildlife wild. Do not feed or disturb animals, or remove native plants.
- Keep to defined vehicle tracks and walking trails.
- Be considerate of other park users.
- Generators, chainsaws, firearms and hunting are not permitted.

Thank you for leaving the bush in its natural state for the enjoyment of others.



For further information contact:

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