

Blue Gum Walk (Joe's Mountain Circuit)



2 hrs

Hard track

4.2 km Circuit

231m

4

This is an enjoyable circuit walk that allows you to explore this rare pocket of Sydney Blue Gum forest. You will follow a signposted track across a few creeks and alongside Waitara Creek, with a few cascades. There are many small sandstone caves and a great diversity in plant life along the way. Sit quietly on the bank of Waitara Creek and you may see a water dragon, or get going early and listen for the Lyrebirds.

49m

136m

Berowra Valley National Park

Are you ready to have fun?

Please ensure you and your group are well prepared and equipped for all possible hazards and delays. Check park closures, weather information and Fire Danger Rating before setting out. Optional side trips and alternate routes noted are not included in this walk's overall grade, length or time estimate. Please allow extra time for resting and exploring areas of interest. The authors, staff and owners of wildwalks take care in preparing this information but will not accept responsibility for any inconvenience, loss or injury you may experience. Please take care, have fun - Happy Walking.

Getting there You can get to Berowra Valley Bushland Park (gps: -33.7005, 151.0867) by car or bus. Car: There is free parking available. This is a circuit walk, so you will finish back at the start. Find up to date and more information including; travel directions, weather, park closures and walker feedback at <http://wild.tl/bg>

0 | Berowra Valley Bushland Park

'Berowra Valley Bushland Park' is also known as Rosemead Rd Park and is found at the bottom end of Rosemead Rd, Hornsby. This is an open area park surrounded by shady eucalyptus trees, making a pleasant spot to rest on a walk. It has a picnic table with bench seats, and a sheltered free electric BBQ. There is a water tap in the park, near the road. There is also a 'Welcome to Old Mans Valley' information sign with information about the traditional country of the Darug and Guringai peoples.

0 | Berowra Valley Bushland Park

(890 m 20 mins) From the lower side of Berowra Valley Bushland Park (at the end of Rosemead Rd, Hornsby), this walk follows the 'Fishponds 1.2km' arrow on the large sign, down the track for approximately 30m, to the intersection with the Rosemead management trail, marked with a Great North Walk arrow.

Veer right: From the intersection, this walk heads downhill along the wide rocky management trail as it bends left (and passing some houses off to the left). The trail then bends right and leads across Old Mans Creek using some concrete stepping stones. The walk then continues by heading up the moderately steep hill and then through a thick blue gum and bracken fern forest. The wide trail leads to the top of the hill then bends left, (ignoring the track on the right) to pass over a saddle. Here the trail leads down the gentle hill, through the turpentine forest for just over 300m to find an intersection with narrower track on the right, marked with arrow posts.

0.89 | Int of Blue Gum Walk and Joes Mountain Service Tra

(300 m 7 mins) Veer right: From the intersection, the walk follows the 'Great North Walk' arrow down the narrower track a short distance to find a three-way intersection marked with a large 'Great North walk' signpost. Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the 'Fishponds' sign along the flat narrow track past the 'Berowra Valley Regional Park' sign. The track soon bends left (passing along the top of an unfenced cliff) then winds down some steep carved rock steps (with a hand rail). The rocky track then leads down along the side of the valley for just over 100m to cross a timber foot bridge. The track then continues for another 70m to find a fenced rock platform and signposted intersection.

1.18 | Fishponds Lookout

Fishponds Lookout is a fenced rock platform at the intersection of the Benowie walking track and the Rosemead trackhead. It is marked with a number of Great North Walk signs. This informally named lookout has good views down over Fishponds, a large waterhole on Berowra Creek. Looking north across the creek, there are views to the upper waterhole and the cliffs on the other side.

1.18 | Optional sidetrip to Fishponds crossing

(70 m 2 mins) Turn right: From the lookout, this walk follows the 'Galston Gorge' sign along the fenced rock shelf (keeping the fence to your left). The track leads down the rocky steps to the edge of Berowra Creek. The walk crosses the creek using the stepping stones, and comes to a small cave on the other side. This creek may be impassable after rain. At the end of this side trip, retrace your steps back to the main walk then Continue straight.

1.18 | Fishponds

Fishponds is a long waterhole on Berowra Creek in Berowra Valley Regional Park. The waterhole is lined with tall cliffs and a few sandstone caves. At the southern end, there are stepping stones to help cross the creek, and a small timber bridge at the northern end. This is a beautiful spot and a worthy place to rest and enjoy the water passing by. The waterhole is fairly popular with local teens in summer, cooling off. Swimming and jumping at the Fishponds waterhole has resulted in fatalities - please heed the signs and Cora's parents' plea and enjoy the water from the edge.

1.18 | Fishponds Lookout

(990 m 21 mins) Turn left: From the lookout, this walk follows the 'Thornleigh Station' arrow (and 'Pennant Hills' arrow) down the timber steps past the 'Blue Gum Walk' sign, and crosses a small creek using the small flat timber bridge. The track leads around the side of the hill for about 100m, then scrambles over some rocks and under a sandstone overhang. The rocky track follows alongside Berowra Creek for another 100m, passing beside some cascades to the end of a notably flat section of track. This walk heads over another rock platform (now with Waitara Creek down and to your right), then soon climbs up through the fork in the tree on left, coming to a large, unfenced rock platform. This leads to a flat area beside some interesting holes in a rock known as 'the spa'. From here, this walk follows the Blue Gum Track arrow post across Waitara Creek, stepping over 'the spa'. This creek may become impassable after heavy rain, the rocks can also be slippery. On the other side, the track leads uphill and bends right, passing a large rock overhang, where the track then leads left, following the arrow posts and climbing up through the crack in the rock. The track leads more gently up through another crack in a rock, then continues fairly gently up along the narrow ridge. After about 200m, the track becomes steeper, climbing up rock steps and over rocks. This area comes alive with Patersonia lilies and pink wax flowers in early spring. The track then mostly flattens out for another 200m, coming to a signposted three-way intersection, where a 'Fishponds' sign points back along the track.

2.17 | Int of the GNW and the Blue Gum Walk (SW)

(820 m 21 mins) Veer left: From the intersection, this walk follows the Blue Gum Walk marker along the bush track, leaving 'The Great North Walk' track behind. The track winds through the blue gum forest, keeping the valley down to the left and houses above on the right as it winds along the side of the hill. The walk comes to an intersection with a bush track, just below some overhead power lines.

Continue straight: From the intersection, the walk follows the bush track south, keeping the valley down to the left. The track winds along the side of the hill until coming down a set of wooden steps to the 'T' intersection at the top of the concrete section of management trail.

2.99 | Int of Blue Gum Walk at bottom of wooden steps

(650 m 15 mins) Turn left: From the intersection, the walk follows the Blue Gum Walk marker down the bumpy concrete management trail, winding

steeply down the hill, until reaching the intersection with an old logging trail on the left .

Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk follows the more defined management trail down the hill, following the Blue Gum Walk marker. The trail meanders down the spur until a sharp left turn, shortly after which the walk comes to an intersection with a bush track (on the right) where there is another Blue Gum Walk marker.

Continue straight: From the intersection, the old management trail heads down the hill and follows Waitara Creek past a small pipeline on the left and a few houses on the right, until coming to an intersection with another management trail from the left - this intersection is marked with a Blue Gum Walk post.

Continue straight: From the intersection, this walk heads north, down the hill with the creek on the right, to the intersection just before the causeway over Waitara Creek. There are usually ducks and brush turkeys in this area. Turn right: From the intersection, this walk follows the management trail across Waitara Creek and up the hill, passing around the gate before arriving on Valley Road, at the lower corner of Ginger Meggs Park.

3.64 | Ginger Meggs Park

Ginger Meggs Park is a large fenced grassy area with childrens play equipment. The park is found on Valley Rd, Hornsby (opposite Lochness Pl). There are two picnic tables (with shelter), a garbage bin and a drinking fountain. The park was named in July 1997, for the comic character Ginger Meggs, created by Jimmy Bancks. Bancks (1889-1952) grew up in the local area, and the creek south of the park is also named in his honour.

3.64 | Ginger Meggs Park

(580 m 12 mins) Veer left: From Ginger Meggs Park, this walk follows Valley Road (past Lochness Pl on the right), keeping the children's playground on the left. Note that water is available from the park. The walk passes 'West Hornsby STP' before coming up to the intersection with Rosemead Road and turning left. The walk follows Rosemead Rd down the hill to the end and heads into Berowra Valley Bushland Park.