

# 20 Walks in Wollongong and Surrounds

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## Short Walks

### 1. Mt Mitchell Lookout at Stanwell Park

This is an excellent walk, highly recommended. With a one-hour steady climb from Lawrence Hargrave Drive just south of Stanwell Park Village, it passes through tall gums with plenty of bird sounds. Starting as the southern end of the Wodi Wodi Track it then joins the Forest Track and ascends about 250 metres before a sizeable rock platform at the very highest point. There are majestic views north, east and south. For the south view walk a few hundred metres further south on the trail to another viewpoint. The cliff edges are not fenced, making the walk unsuitable for toddlers

Length: 4km return  
Time: 2 – 2.5 hours  
Grade: Medium to Hard – some steep sections  
Access: Limited parking at Wodi Wodi track head, Lawrence Hargrave Drive, 1km south of Stanwell Park shops or walk 800m north on the shared pathway from Coalcliff railway station. Take care on roadway.

### 2. The Goat Track – Stanwell Park Station to Stanwell Tops

West of Stanwell Park Village there is a varied walk that climbs the escarpment to the plateau above. The first part of the walk is in rainforest and as you ascend there is dryer eucalypt forest. Once at the top you can walk north via Stonehaven Road and carefully cross Lawrence Hargrave Drive to the Princess Marina walk and to Kelly’s Falls. Or just explore the bushland on top of the plateau. There are a number of intersecting tracks and informal lookouts with views back to the coast and to Mt Mitchell to the south. Note the cliff edges are not fenced, making the walk unsuitable for toddlers.

Length: 3km return  
Time: 1-2 Hours  
Grade: Medium to Hard – steep ascent  
Access: Stanwell Park railway station – western platform

### 3. Helensburgh Historic Railway / Glow Worm Tunnel

Helensburgh’s first railway station was opened on 1 January 1889 between two single line tunnels at the junction of Tunnel Road and Vera Street. The short Helensburgh Tunnel was at the northern end of the station and was 80 metres long. The much longer Metropolitan Tunnel was at the southern end. From Helensburgh station exit the main car park and cross Tunnel Road. Follow the open passageway along an abandoned railway line passing an old Helensburgh Railway Station sign. Proceed through the tunnel, about 623m. Take a torch and maybe gumboots.

**Warning: For safety take a torch. It can be wet and slippery so use caution and wear appropriate footwear.**

Length: 1.25km return  
Time: 1 hour  
Grade: Easy – family friendly  
Access: Helensburgh railway station

### 4. Sublime Point Nature Trail – Woodward Track

Visitors to Sublime Point lookout wanting to experience some of the wonderful bushland the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation area has to offer will find the Woodward Loop Nature Trail the ideal choice. It has varied and interesting flora with many wildflowers in spring. The track starting immediately behind the picnic area amenities block will take walkers in the easier anti-clockwise direction. An NPA donated picnic table will

be found part way around the loop that provides the opportunity to sit and enjoy the surroundings.  
**Warning:** At the time of writing the western side of the loop is in poor track condition but out and back on the eastern side is a great walk.  
Length: 700m loop Time: 30 minutes Grade: Easy – family friendly  
Access: Sublime Point Lookout north of Bulli Pass

### 5. Austinmer to Sublime Point Lookout

This popular Illawarra walking track can be accessed from Austinmer. 

This track is closed indefinitely due to landslip damage and safety concerns.

 Resting stations and nine sets of ladders before arriving to witness great views from the top. For safety, always face the ladders climbing up or down. For wet and muddy conditions boot cleaning facilities are located at the ladders. Toilets and café are located at the lookout. This walk can be extended to the south to Panorama House and on to Bulli Lookout.

Length: 2km (from track head) or 4km (from station) return  
Time: 2-3 Hours  
Grade: Hard – very steep ascent  
Access: Austinmer railway station or park in southern end of Foothills Rd

### 6. Maddens Falls – Dharawal National Park

This lovely walk starts from a signposted car park on the southern side of Darkes Forest Rd. The walk goes down a slight hill and on to a boardwalk near Maddens Creek. Part way along at the creek edge is a small dam which creates a delightful pool. Further along, at the end of the track, is a viewing platform and seat from which you can enjoy the natural surroundings including a 10m waterfall. NPWS don’t want walkers going off the track on this walk due to the sensitive flora. On return to the car park visit the orchard across the road to sample or purchase some fresh produce.

Length: 800m return  
Time: 30 minutes  
Grade: Easy – family friendly  
Access: Darkes Forest Rd, 2.6km from Old Princes Highway, Maddens Plains.

## Walk Location Guide (Short walks, Longer walks)



### 7. Wollongong Botanic Garden

The Wollongong Botanic Garden <https://wollongong.nsw.gov.au/botanicgarden> is about 3km north west of Wollongong CBD and is situated at the base of Mt Keira. It has an area of just over 27 hectares. Set on gently undulating land, a network of paths leads through diverse habitats such as woodlands, arid zone and rainforest. The regular lunchtime bird walk is a free guided walk led by Illawarra Birders Club exploring the rich bird life. First Thursday of the month 12.30 to 1.30pm, bookings not required. Meet at the Discovery Centre.

Length: Up to 2km  
Time: Variable  
Grade: Easy – family friendly  
Access: Main entrance is on Murphy’s Avenue with others on Northfields Avenue and Madeline Street.

### 8. Tom Thumb Lagoon— Wollongong Greenhouse Park

Just south of the Wollongong CBD, opposite the corner of Springhill Road and Bridge Street, is Wollongong Greenhouse Park, a former rubbish dump site but now a bushland restoration project. There is a perimeter circuit walk plus a trail to the top of the small hill with views over the steelworks and the remnant wetland of Tom Thumb Lagoon. The site is now an oasis in the industrial landscape.

Length: return 2.5km  
Time: 1—2 hours  
Grade: Easy  
Access: Park at Tate or Keira Streets or walk 1.4km from CBD.

### 9. Mt Kembla - Summit Track

Mt Kembla summit is one of the highest and most recognisable points on the Illawarra Escarpment. It affords wonderful views of southern Wollongong. The summit track head can be found signposted a short distance to the east of the Mt Kembla Lookout carpark and climbs steadily through forest to the summit. From here extensive coastal plain and ocean views can be seen as well as to the southern highlands. Also see walk 20.

Length: 3km return  
Time: 2-3 Hours  
Grade: Medium — Hard. Steep ascent and 1 short ladder.  
Access: Mt Kembla lookout carpark—Upper Cordeaux Rd

### 10. Mt Kembla — Memorial Pathway

Mt Kembla Village has a rich but disastrous mining history and this pathway is dedicated to those that have worked there. Stage 1 follows the original railway easement from Mt Kembla Mine to Port Kembla. Historical photos and information can be viewed on the way to Stones Road. Stage 2 is in a natural and landscaped section consisting of a variety of native plants and trees to Benjamin Road. Stage 3 climbs steadily on a winding track through eucalypt forest (with a lot of unwelcome exotic privet) to the escarpment. This point was the site of the Bradford Breaker, used in the processing of extracted coal before rail transport to Port Kembla. There is a platform for viewing the coastal strip.

Length: Up to 4km return  
Time: Up to 2 hours  
Grade: Easy — medium  
Access: Signposted on Cordeaux Rd, eastern fringe of Mt Kembla Village

### Special Nature of the Illawarra Bushland

*The natural bushland areas to the west of Wollongong not only provide a wonderful backdrop to the city but also have special significance as a biodiversity hot spot. This section of the Great Dividing Range with its rainforest gullies and eucalypt forests is home to a diverse range of native flora and fauna. The Illawarra escarpment also forms a vital green corridor connecting the southern end of the Royal National Park south to Macquarie Pass National Park and beyond.*

***We would like to acknowledge the original custodians of this land we walk, the Dharawal people.***

11. Mt Keira tracks — Robertsons Lookout

Just west of Mt Keira Lookout and connecting with the Mt Keira Ring Track, a varied walk climbs to a high point on the escarpment. There is a viewing platform which provides extensive views of the coastal plain and of Mt Keira itself. This walk can either be done as a side trip when on the Mt Keira Ring Track or as stand-alone walk. Park at the corner of Mt Keira Rd and Queen Elizabeth Drive. The track starts just off the roadway to the southwest. Also see walk 19.

Length: up to 4km return  
Time: Up to 2 hours  
Grade: Easy - medium  
Access: Cnr Mt Keira Rd and Queen Elizabeth Drive, Mt Keira

12. Mt Keira tracks — Ken Ausburn Track

This track is dedicated to the memory of the late Dr Ken Ausburn, the first head of physics at UoW, who had a great love of the Illawarra Escarpment. As a foundation member of the South Coast Conservation Society he and Dave Walsh put forward a plan for an escarpment park, now the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area. From the track head at the corner of Robsons Rd and Northfields Ave, just west of the University and Botanic Garden, walk up the steep hill. The track passes a couple of look-out points, the Lawrence Hargrave memorial sculpture and some mining relics. At a junction with the Mt Keira Ring Track (walk 19), return down the hill or turn south on the Ring Track towards Byarong Park.

Length: 1.6km one way  
Time: 30 min one way  
Grade: Hard – steep sections  
Access: Corner of Robsons Rd and Northfields Ave, Keiraville

Safe Walking Tips

- *It's best not to walk alone*
- *Take plenty of water and food for the walk*
- *Use sunscreen, wear a hat and suitable clothing*
- *Tell someone where you are going*

13. Mt Keira tracks — Dave Walsh Track

Cross Mt Keira Rd from the Mt Keira Ring Track (Walk 14) near the scout camp entry road. The track climbs through varied vegetation and rocky outcrops to reach the top of Mt Keira at the southern end of the Summit Park. It is then best to walk north on the Summit Loop track to the Mt Keira Lookout where there are picnic tables and amenities. By combining this walk with the Ken Ausburn Track (Walk 12) and the southern half of the Mt Keira Ring Track you can complete a 'city to summit' ascent of Mt Keira.

Length: 500m one way  
Time: Up to 30 minutes one way  
Grade: Hard – steep rocky sections  
Access: Gated track opposite corner of Mt Keira Rd and Scout Camp entry road.

14. Illawarra Rhododendron & Rainforest Gardens

Nestled under the Illawarra escarpment at Mt Pleasant, very close to Wollongong, are 13 hectares of gardens and rainforest. In the lower gardens you can stroll along a series of brick and grass paths meandering around the lake, past colourful garden beds of exotics such as rhododendrons, vireyas, azaleas then head up the slopes, through the feral deer proof fence to the Rainforest Gardens. Walk on the steeper bush tracks through the endangered Illawarra Subtropical Rainforest. Visit the May Barrie sculpture near large red cedars and a huge Fig Tree. Hike under the archways of Cabbage Tree palms, beware of the enormous stinging trees and look out for Native Orchids and a range of fungi. An entry payment of \$5 per adult allows the volunteers to continue to nurture, maintain and develop the gardens. Cash boxes are located in the car park or payments made by card or bank transfers are an option.

Length: Up to 2km  
Time: Up to 2 hours  
Grade: Easy in the lower gardens, some short steep sections to the upper rainforest section  
Access: Off Parrish Ave, Mt Pleasant. Follow New Mt Pleasant Rd up the escarpment cross the bridge over the M1 and head to the T intersection with Parrish Ave. Turn left and the gardens are on the right after the bend in the road.  
More info: Ph 0493628855 [enquiries@irrg.au](mailto:enquiries@irrg.au) [www.irrg.au](http://www.irrg.au)

15. Hill 60 and Port Kembla coast

Starting from the car park near Port Kembla Swimming Pool, climb the steep grassy slope, using laneways, stairs and foot-paths, continue all the way to the lookout at the highest point on Hill 60. After taking in the wonderful views find the partly well defined track down the northern side of the hill. At the bottom cross the grass clearing and walk north on path, beach or rocks all the way to the white triangle shaped (old tank trap remnants) features on the headland in the distance. This is the Breakwater Battery Museum and just beyond, under the harbour pilot station, there is a café. Walk back to the start along the pathway or explore further around the museum or the industrial harbour and breakwater area.

Length: Up to 6km return  
Time: Up to 2.5 hours  
Grade: Medium—steep sections  
Access: Corner Olympic Blvd and Cowper St, Port Kembla

Want to learn more about bushwalking?

Bushwalking101.org

Look, Learn, Explore!

For a beginner, going bush is a very daunting task. <http://www.bushwalking101.org/> is a website to help people better settle into bushwalking with the NPA. It's about sharing 'bite-sized' information and practical advice to new bushwalkers. Our hope is to encourage our new members to take up bushwalking as a lifelong passion and to continue to grow and improve their bushwalking skills.

Longer Walks

16. Illawarra Escarpment Traverse — Great Southern Walk

This traverse of the Northern Illawarra Escarpment from Stanwell Park to Sublime Point and soon to be Bulli Tops is highly recommended for fit walkers, with many great viewpoints and varied vegetation along the way. This walk forms part of a long awaited, but not yet fully constructed, multi-day walk along the escarpment, from Botany Bay and the Royal National Park in the north to Mt Kembla and beyond in the south. The Illawarra so far completed section can be walked in one day. See separate brochure on NPA Illawarra web page for more detail.  
**Note:** There is no public transport at the southern end of the walk.  
Length: Up to 16.5km  
Time: 5 to 7 hours  
Grade: Hard - long day with some steep slopes  
Access: Start Coalcliff station (see walk 1), finish Sublime Point at time of writing

17. Forest Track at Maddens Plains (part of walk 16)

The Forest Track is an undulating walk along the escarpment edge from an access point on a service road north of Sublime Point to Mt Mitchell (walk 1), overlooking Stanwell Park. It passes through many different vegetation communities and is an excellent introduction to escarpment flora. There are also spectacular coastal views from various vantage points, though care must be taken as they are not fenced and the cliffs are very steep. The track is generally in good condition but may be a little overgrown in places. There was a hazard reduction burn at the northern end in April 2020. Walk along the service road from Old Princes Highway in an easterly direction and look for the track head on the left, just before the escarpment edge.

Length: 12km return  
Time: 3 to 5 hours return  
Grade: Medium – undulating  
Access: Gated service road 4.2km north of the Sublime Point lookout turnoff on the Old Princes Highway

18. Bellambi Lagoon and Sandhill Circuit

Starting at Towradgi Park, this walk includes beach, bush, lagoon and shared pathway. From the car park at the eastern end of Towradgi Rd, walk north along the beach for about 1.3km then turn up into the dune at the steps and cross it heading north. Continue down through the regenerating coastal vegetation,

coming out at the sports field. Walk east back to the beach, around the headland. You can continue along the off-leash dog beach back to Towradgi Park. An alternative is to return via the shared pathway which heads inland from the oval. This goes along the edge of the lagoon, rich in bird life, and past the caravan park back to Towradgi. A shorter version of the walk is to start and finish at the car park at the beach end of Murray Rd, East Corrimal.

Length: up to 5km return  
Time: Up to 2 hours  
Grade: Easy – some sand walking  
Access: Car park at beach end of Towradgi Rd, Towradgi.

19. Mt Keira tracks - Ring Track

This is an iconic Wollongong and Illawarra Escarpment walk which circumnavigates Mt Keira. There have been recent track improvements which have enhanced this great rainforest experience. Best starting points are either Byarong Park, a pleasant picnic spot in rainforest, which is part way up Mt Keira Rd from West Wollongong, or the same start point for walk 11. It's best to walk in a clockwise direction to avoid climbing the large number of steps on the northern side of the mountain.  
**Warning:** At the time of writing the northern section of the track is partly closed to do landslip, check for signage.

Length: Up to 5km Time: Up to 3 hours Grade: Easy - Medium  
Access: Byarong Park picnic area or park on corner Mt Keira Rd and Queen Elizabeth Drive

20. Mt Kembla — Ring Track

This walk can be started at the same location as walk 9 but is an easier but longer option. It has a section of excellent rainforest as the track descends to a fire trail which then should be taken to the north. This circumnavigates the mountain, eventually meeting Cordeaux Rd. The bitumen road must then be walked back up to the car park. This track can also be accessed from the top of Farmborough Rd. Pass through the locked gate and climb up the steep road past historic mining cottages and pit pony stables. Be careful of traffic on roadways.  
Length: 5km return  
Time: 1.5—2 hours  
Grade: Easy to medium – some steps  
Access: Mt Kembla lookout carpark—Upper Cordeaux Rd

**The National Parks Association of NSW (NPA)** is a non-government conservation group that seeks to protect, connect and restore the integrity and diversity of natural systems in NSW and beyond, through national parks, marine sanctuaries and other means.

- **NPA** has been active for over 60 years and has helped establish many of NSW's national parks and nature reserves.
- **NPA** advocates for best practice management of our local parks and reserves and to preserve our natural heritage, wildlife and special places for future generations.
- **NPA** runs one of Australia's largest bushwalking clubs with dedicated volunteer leaders coordinating over 1000 bushwalks and other outdoor activities across NSW every year.
- **NPA** encourages the inclusion of people from diverse backgrounds and abilities in its nature-based outdoor activities.
- **The NPA Bushwalking and Activities Program** is available on-line and published quarterly along with our magazine **Nature NSW** which contains articles on all things nature.
- As a registered charity, **NPA's** important conservation work relies on donations and memberships.
- **NPA Illawarra** is one of fifteen branches throughout NSW that provide bushwalking and other outdoor activities and campaign on key issues in their local area.

**New members and supporters are always welcome.**

**Join NPA Illawarra today and be part of the community team working for our environment and enjoying friendly outdoor activities.**

[npansw.org.au](http://npansw.org.au)  
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