



NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service

Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk

(formerly Tweed Byron Hinterland Walk)

Master Plan



Acknowledgment of Country

We acknowledge the Widjabul Wia-bal and Minjungbal people of the Bundjalung Nation, the traditional owners and custodians of the lands this track passes through, who have occupied this Country for many thousands of years.

We acknowledge their continued connection to the land, seas and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders of the past, present and future, and to their cultures, traditions and spiritual beliefs.



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1. Summary

The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is creating an iconic multi-day walking experience in the Tweed Byron hinterland on the NSW North Coast. The Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project will provide a multi-day walking experience, the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk, complemented by optional short walks and side tracks. It will offer a compelling alternative to the popular visitor destination of Byron Bay.

The walk traverses the rim of an ancient volcano, passing through Gondwanan rainforest and providing walkers spectacular views of the landscape.

This master plan outlines the following key concepts for the 3-night, 4-day walk between visitor nodes in Mount Jerusalem National Park and Nightcap National Park:

- the walk starts at the Unicorn Falls car park (which also acts as the trail head for the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk) in Mount Jerusalem National Park, approximately 15-kms south-east of the village of Uki.
- the walk finishes at Minyon Falls Lookout, in Nightcap National Park.
- the walk will be approximately 39-kms with an additional 12.2-kms of optional short walks and side tracks associated with the multi-day walk.
- the walk will link newly constructed sections of track with existing walking tracks, park management trails and old logging trails.
- mostly, the track will be a grade 4 classification (recommended for experienced bushwalkers).

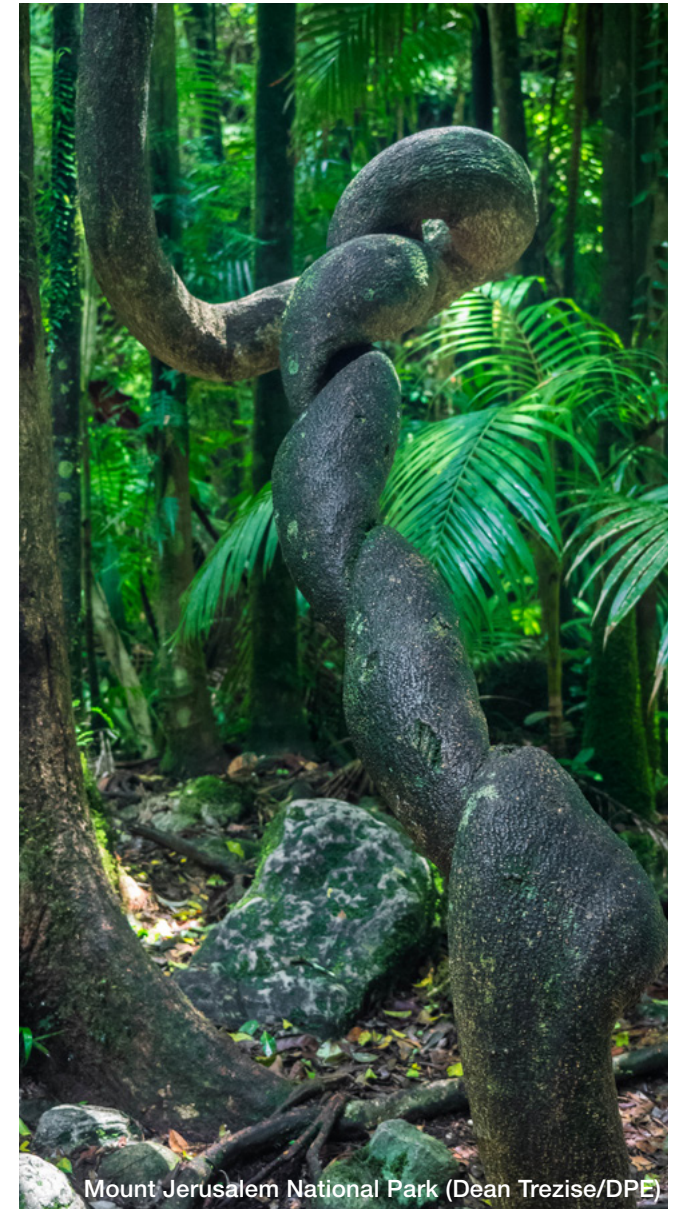
- the walk will be undertaken from north to south, either independently or with a licensed commercial tour operator. People undertaking the walk will need to book and pay camping fees.
- three remote, walk-in camps will be established to provide basic facilities for walkers.

The master plan sets the vision for the multi-day walk component of the Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project over time, according to available budgets and resources. The draft master plan includes some elements that are not progressing as part of the current \$7.35-million Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project.

The project is also guided by 2 other master plans:

- Unicorn Falls Master Plan guides development of the northern visitor hub in Mount Jerusalem National Park, including the Unicorn Falls car park.
- Minyon Falls Master Plan outlines upgrades to the existing day use areas at the end of the walk, in the Minyon Falls area.

Public comments on the draft master plan helped identify additional actions required to deliver the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk to a high standard. Amendments have been made to the alignment of the walk on days 2 and 3, as well as minor changes to the design of Camp 2.





Doon Doon Wollumbin view (Viktor Posnov/DPE)

1.1 Key terms used in this master plan

Tracks and trails

The Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project refers to the broader project which encompasses:

- the multi-day Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk, and optional short walks and side tracks as described in this master plan
- development of the Unicorn Falls car park and nearby Unicorn Falls, and upgrades to day use areas at Minyon Falls, both described in separate master plans.

Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk is the name of the 3-night, 4-day walk described in the master plan.

Short walks and side tracks

Short walks refer to one-hour, half-day and full-day walks that can be undertaken as part of the multi-day walk, or by day visitors to the parks. These short walks are accessible from the main visitor hubs.

Side tracks refer to short tracks off the main multi-day walking route which provide additional walking experiences.

2. Introduction

2.1 Context for the project

The \$7.35-million Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project will deliver one of the signature walking tracks in NSW national parks, the Gidjoom Gulganyi Walk. This multi-day walking experience is part of a network of 13 Great Walks being established across New South Wales to offer world-class bushwalking experiences for domestic and international visitors.

The latest NPWS research shows that visitors to national parks contribute \$1.4 billion annually to Tweed/Northern Rivers economy and help generate more than 935 direct and indirect jobs for the region each year.

The Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project will deliver a range of new nature-based experiences in the Tweed/Byron area to further enhance this

economic activity by encouraging visitors to stay longer and explore the region.

National park management and visitation in New South Wales generates \$18 billion in economic activity annually and supports over 74,000 jobs, with 75% of those economic benefits occurring in regional areas.

Project objectives

- Create an appealing new walking experience of international standing.
- Protect and respect the region's environmental and cultural heritage, and foster future conservation advocacy and stewardship while providing for nature-based experiences.
- Create alternative and compelling nature-based experiences in the hinterland to increase dispersal of visitors from the coast.
- Contribute to ongoing maintenance costs and ensure financial sustainability of the walk experience.
- Manage the overall increase in visitation to Mount Jerusalem and Nightcap national parks, focusing on increasing visitors in non-peak periods.
- Create nature-based experiences that support the sustainable growth of the regional economy.
- Create tourism-related projects and business opportunities for NPWS and host communities.
- Build strong partnerships with industry, government and host communities.
- Create employment opportunities for host communities.
- Provide new opportunities for Aboriginal communities to appropriately share their culture, participate in and benefit from the regional tourism economy.



Uki Cafe (Uki Cafe/DPE)



2.2 The vision

The vision for the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk is:

Showcasing spectacular rainforests and breathtaking views, the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk will deliver a multi-day experience for adventurous walkers in a landscape rich in Aboriginal cultural heritage, that will attract visitors from Australia and around the world.

This immersive experience will draw people into the NSW North Coast hinterland and help foster advocacy for environmental conservation and sustainability. Local economies will benefit by providing much-needed tourism services, including opportunities for new tourism partnerships, and from the creation of opportunities to support the aspirations of Aboriginal custodians. These benefits will continue to grow as future track linkages to nearby villages and rail trails are completed by local partners.

Overview of Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk (NPWS/DPE)

2.3 Location context

The walk traverses Mount Jerusalem and Nightcap national parks and Whian Whian State Conservation Area in the Tweed, Lismore and Byron local government areas. The closest major centres are Murwillumbah, Mullumbimby, Byron Bay and Lismore. The start of the walk is about one hour's drive from both Ballina Byron Gateway and Gold Coast airports.

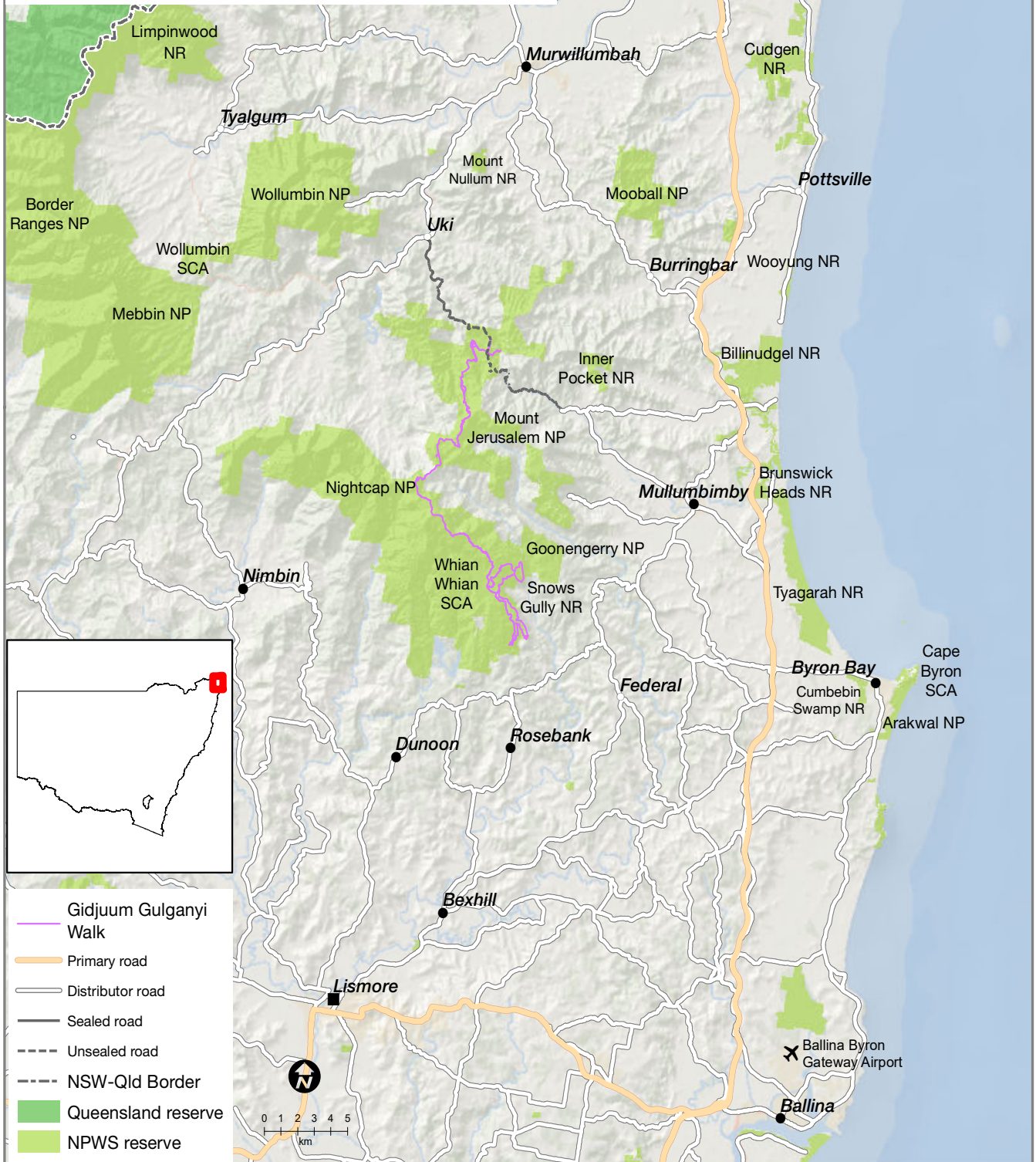


Figure 1 Regional context

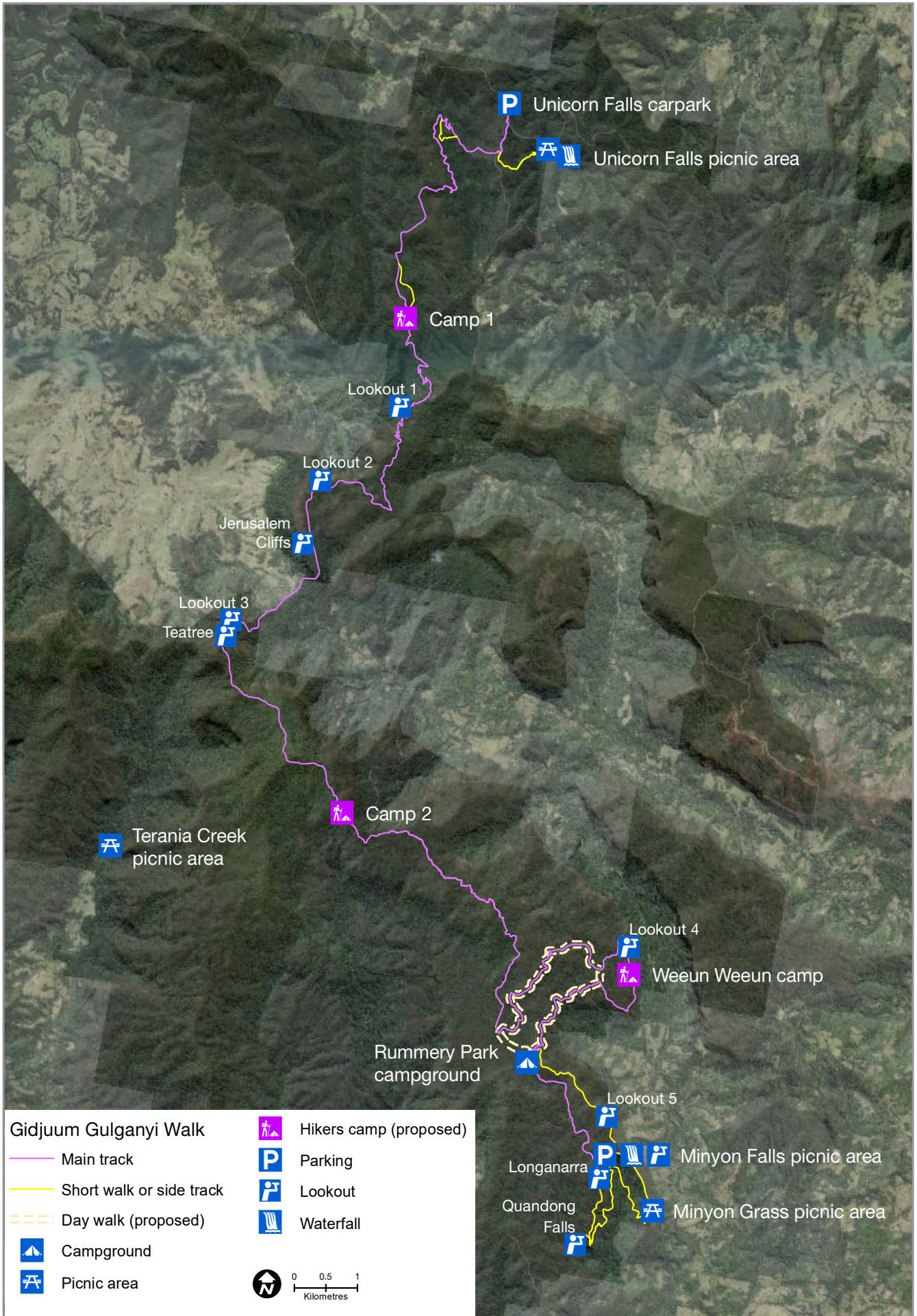


Figure 2 Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk

2.4 Project details

The route for the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk is shown in Figure 2.

The multi-day walk

- The walk is approximately 39-kms from north to south.
- The route links existing walking tracks, park management trails and old logging trails with newly constructed sections of track.
- The majority of the track will meet a grade 4 walking track classification (i.e. a hiking track with a natural surface and only basic signposting).
- The walk will be able to be undertaken independently or with a licensed commercial tour operator, and all users will need to book and pay a camping fee.

Short walks and side tracks

- Existing and new sections of tracks and trails will provide optional side tracks off the main walk as well as short, half-day and full-day walking opportunities.

The camps

- Three new camps will be established to support walkers.
- These remote, walk-in bush camps will provide basic facilities.

Northern and southern visitor hubs

- Unicorn Falls car park and trail head has been developed to support walkers.
- Minyon Falls picnic area, where the walk ends, has been upgraded.
- Separate master plans describe the works undertaken in these areas.

Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk is the new name for the Tweed Byron Hinterland Walk.

Gidjuum Gulganyi means ‘Old People’s Track’ and was jointly chosen as the walk’s new name by the Widjabul Wia-bal Native Title Holders and the Wollumbin Consultative Group.

The new name reflects the fact that the walk passes through the ancient traditional lands that Widjabul Wia-bal and Minjungbal people have traversed and occupied for many thousands of years.



Minyon Falls, Nightcap National Park (Dean Trezise/DPE)

Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk

The 3-night, 4-day walk starts at the Unicorn Falls car park in Mount Jerusalem National Park near the village of Uki, and heads south to Minyon Falls in Nightcap National Park.

The walk traverses the rim of an ancient volcano, passing through Gondwanan rainforest and providing spectacular views of the landscape.

A number of short walks and side tracks off the main walk will offer additional walking opportunities. The visitor nodes at the start and end of the walk support and enhance the signature multi-day walk experience. A short section of the walk passes through private property along a public easement.

The Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk will enable the development of strong partnerships with the local community, Aboriginal custodians, as well as industry and government stakeholders, boosting regional visitor economies and improving community wellbeing. Close to popular destinations like the Gold Coast and Byron Bay, the North Coast region has high visitation and is easily accessed from regional centres and airports.

The walk will provide visitors with a compelling alternative experience in the hinterland to encourage dispersal of coastal visitation from the Byron Bay area. Another key driver for the project is to assist in the management of visitors and access to places of Aboriginal cultural significance in accordance with the wishes of the Aboriginal custodians.

Short walks and side tracks

A number of short walks and side tracks offer additional walking opportunities. These include:

- Unicorn Falls Walk – a new 4.2-km return walk starting at the Unicorn Falls car park. The walk starts on the multi-day walking track, then follows a new 1.3-km side track to the falls.
- Scrub Creek Trail – this short walk off the main walking route allows exploration of a rainforest gully upstream of the Sand Ridge Road bridge before linking back up to Sand Ridge Road close to camp. This could also be done as part of an extended day walk from the Unicorn Falls car park.
- Jerusalem Cliffs Lookout – a short side track off the main walking route along an existing steep track leads to spectacular views.
- Minyon Falls picnic area to Rummery Park Loop – a half-day walk along existing tracks.
- Minyon Falls Track – a full-day walk, including new sections of track (not progressing as part of the current project) to the base of the falls and to link Minyon Grass picnic area to Minyon Falls picnic area.
- Whiskey Creek Loop – a short loop off the main walking route on Whiskey Creek Trail before walking alongside a beautiful creek and looping back onto the same trail to return.
- Peates Loop Walk – a new 6.5-km loop walk from Rummery Park Campground, through the Nightcap rainforest along Peates Mountain Track, and old logging roads. The loop links to Perlite Road, joins the main walking route, and traverses the ridge above Snows Gully, returning to the campground.



Postmans tree (Dean Trezise/DPE)

2.5 Regional tourism in context

Tourism is a significant industry in the NSW North Coast region, contributing \$3.7 billion to the economy with 12 million visits per annum, making it the third most popular tourism destination in Australia, based on domestic visitor nights. At the same time the population of the North Coast is growing rapidly and transport links to the urban growth areas of South East Queensland and Greater Sydney are improving.

The vision of Destination North Coast's Destination Management Plan 2023-2030 is 'to sustainably grow yield of visitors to North Coast NSW... without compromising the distinct natural beauty and communities that makes the region so unique'. While the Destination Management Plan identified the

abundant nature-based attractions and experiences, National Parks and State Forests as a strength, it also acknowledged that the lack of hinterland products and experiences as a weakness. The Gidjoom Gulganyi Walk plays to the area's strengths and will also facilitate growth in the local hinterland economy by providing a world-class product.

Growing tourism opportunities across the region is also a key strategic priority in the Northern Rivers Regional Economic Development Strategy 2018–2022, which aims to accelerate the return of tourism after the bushfires of 2019–20, the COVID-19 crisis and record floods in early 2022. A long-term initiative of the strategy is to continue to support development of the tourism industry.



Palm Forest Walking Track (Branden Bodman/DPE)

Economic value of national parks on the North Coast*

The positive impacts of visitation to North Coast national parks include:

- \$5.8 billion of direct and flow-on expenditure as a result of park-related visitation
- direct and flow-on expenditure that supported over 11,000 full-time jobs in the North Coast
- \$1.42 billion of recreation value provided by North Coast parks
- annual visitation to North Coast parks of 7.3 million visits.

*This information relates to the NPWS North Coast Branch region, which encompasses the coast and escarpment from Laurieton to the Queensland border. The statistics are based on 2018 information.



Minyon Falls viewing platform (Jimmy Malecki/DPE)

3. The master plan process

3.1 Developing the master plan

Our national parks are managed to protect their unique values and provide for sustainable visitor use and enjoyment. The development of visitor facilities is undertaken in a socially, culturally and environmentally sensitive manner.

In developing the master plan, NPWS made a significant investment in project planning and assessment, including completing a comprehensive set of cultural, geotechnical and environmental assessments. This built on insights gained from earlier economic modelling and concept development work.

The development of the draft master plan included:

- site visits and investigations
- targeted consultation with key stakeholders
- consideration of comments from over 300 people who have registered their interest in the project
- in-depth engagement with Aboriginal custodians and advisers
- identification of issues and opportunities
- site analysis and options studies.

The draft master plan was placed on public exhibition from 27 October to 23 December 2022.

Over 430 people were notified about the public exhibition period and 62 submissions were received from a range of stakeholders, including individuals, residents, business operators, local councils, bushwalking groups and other park visitors.

The summary of feedback received during the public consultation period is available at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/submissions-summary-public-exhibition-of-tweed-byron-hinterland-walk-draft-master-plan.

The process for developing the master plan and completing the project is illustrated in Figure 3.

Separate master plans were also developed for the Unicorn Falls and the Minyon Falls precincts. These are available online. See references on page 32.

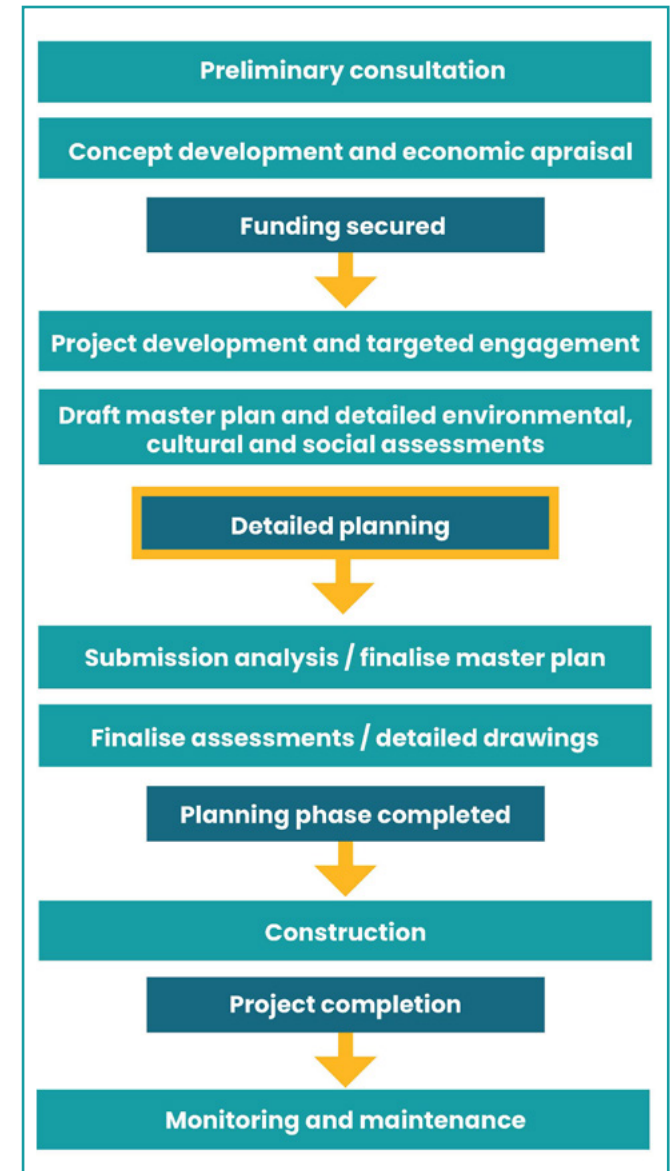


Figure 3 Master planning process



Planning at Camp 2 (Barbara Webster/DPE)

3.2 Consulting with project stakeholders

Our stakeholders are critical to the success of this project. Throughout the early phases of the project NPWS actively engaged with local communities and community groups, tourism operators, and various local and state government departments to inform and improve the concepts presented in this master plan.

Positive and ongoing consultation with the Aboriginal community via the Wollumbin Consultative Group and Widjabul Wia-bul Native Title holders has been fundamental to delivering the project. NPWS will continue to work with the Aboriginal community to help them meet their aspirations, including community development opportunities arising from the project.

Tweed, Byron, Ballina and Lismore councils will also be key partners in developing and promoting new nature-based experiences, including through their destination marketing arms (e.g., Destination NSW, Destination North Coast and Destination Tweed). Consultation with councils about the project will be ongoing.

Other key stakeholders include the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia advisory committees, Uki Village and District Residents Association, NPWS North Coast Regional Advisory Committee, Southern Cross University, park neighbours, bushwalking and other user groups, conservation groups, licensed commercial tour operators and other potential business partners.

Community support for the project is vital to realise the predicted economic and social benefits to regional communities. Local residents have strong connections to their national parks and expect to be engaged in decisions.

Track planning and fieldwork

The detailed planning for the alignment of the track occurred between July 2019 and July 2022. This included 9 engagement meetings and more than 30 days of fieldwork or site visits with a diverse range of stakeholders:

- Widjabul Wia-bul People
- Widjabul Wia-bal Native Title holders. They are no longer 'applicants' as their native title has been awarded
- Wollumbin Consultative Group, including members of families with knowledge and links to the area
- Tweed Byron Local Aboriginal Land Council
- Bundjalung of Byron Bay (Arakwal) Aboriginal Corporation
- Northern Rivers Bushwalking Club
- Uki Village and District Residents Association
- NPWS rangers and field staff from the Richmond River and Tweed Byron areas.

Further investigations followed the public exhibition period, as NPWS followed up on comments and proposals submitted by stakeholders.



Fleay's Barred Frog (Darren McHugh/DPE)

3.3 Planning and design considerations

The subtropical and warm temperate rainforests in Nightcap National Park have links to the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana and are part of the World Heritage listed Gondwana Rainforests of Australia. The 3 reserves that the track passes through are noted for their exceptional biodiversity and the presence of numerous threatened species, including many endemic and Gondwanan relict species.

The main vegetation types along the walk are rainforest (23%), wet sclerophyll (32%), dry sclerophyll (43%), and tea-tree scrub (2%).

The walking tracks and associated infrastructure have been sited and designed to ensure minimal impact to the surrounding ecosystems.

In recognition of the track's location within these biologically and culturally important conservation reserves, the design process undertaken by NPWS is based on key design principles that guide all aspects of park facilities design and management (see box). These principles give primacy to an area's ecological and cultural values and are supported by working in collaboration with ecologists, Aboriginal custodians and others in the community. These principles informed and directed the design of all elements relating to the track, including camps, lookouts, furniture design and locations of interest.

Key design principles

The principles guiding the development of the master plan are:

- **Consistent look and feel** – facilities should create a consistent look and feel for national parks and reserves in New South Wales.
- **Sustainability** – facilities should embody sustainable materials and design applications, provide for the ongoing efficient use of resources, and where possible assist in educating park users as to sustainable resource management and conservation principles.
- **Heritage** – protection of natural and cultural heritage values, as part of the park experience, is to be achieved in all facilities provision.
- **Harmony with nature** – natural features in the landscape should predominate, and facilities should harmonise with their setting.
- **Enhancing the visitor experience** – facilities should enhance and not detract from the visitor experience and should be fit for the purpose intended.
- **Genuine materials** – materials are to be genuine and true to character.

4. Landscape and regional context

4.1 Context and culture

Gidjoom Gulganyi Walk traverses the southern edge of an ancient volcanic caldera, the Tweed caldera. Standing at 1,100 metres, Wollumbin (formerly called Mount Warning) is the central plug of the Tweed Volcano which finished erupting about 20 million years ago. The massive shield volcano was about 2 kilometres high and spread across a vast area from Byron Bay to Lismore to Mount Tamborine in Queensland.

Today, the volcano has eroded, leaving behind the Tweed caldera with Wollumbin at its centre. The caldera comprises many mountains and ranges including: Nightcap Range, Border Ranges and McPherson Range in New South Wales; and Lamington and Springbrook plateaus in Queensland.

Wollumbin is considered to be of the highest significance to Aboriginal people, as a sacred ceremonial and cultural complex that is linked to traditional law and custom, and connected to a broader cultural and spiritual landscape.

Gidjoom Gulganyi Walk passes through the traditional lands of the Widjabul Wia-bal and Minjungbal people from the Bundjalung Nation, who have inhabited the area for thousands of years.

The powerful significance of the cultural landscape, its layers of meaning and spiritual connections are embedded within the Lore of the Widjabul Wia-bal and Minjungbal People.

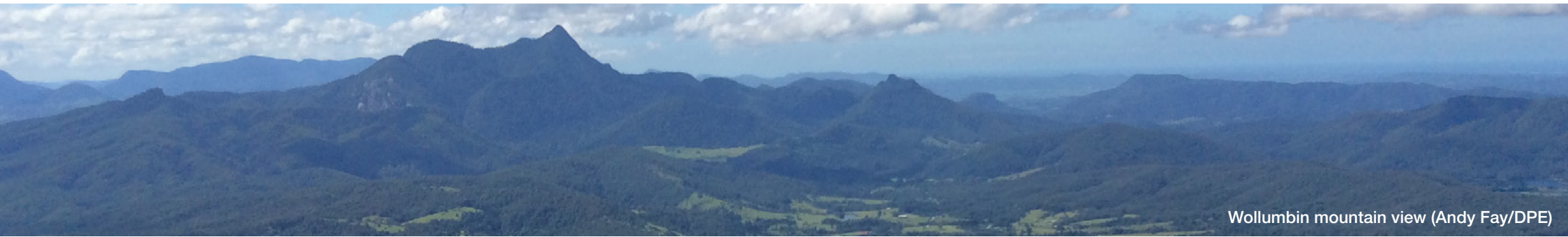
The lands through which the walk passes are part of a rich and significant Aboriginal cultural landscape. This landscape encompasses a complex network of places associated with men and women through all stages of life.

It includes creation places, ceremonial sites, traditional pathways and camps. These sites and places are interrelated and bound together by the Dreaming of Aboriginal communities. Aboriginal people maintain a living culture and have a unique and deep attachment to this Country.

4.2 The regional visitor experience

The surrounding shires rely on tourism to support their local economies. Opportunities for nature-based adventures are a key driver for visitors to travel to the region. However, the majority of visitors stay in coastal areas, so this project will contribute to dispersing visitors to the hinterland. The nature of the winding road system particularly lends itself to exploring the hinterland, and park visitors deliver local economic benefits to towns and villages such as Uki, Mullumbimby and Federal. There are also opportunities to provide future links to the Northern Rivers Rail Trail. A number of businesses within 15 kilometres of the start and finish of the walk provide useful support services for walkers, including cafes, general stores, service stations and accommodation.

Gidjoom Gulganyi Walk will provide opportunities for licensed commercial tour operators and businesses to develop new visitor experiences across the region. The walk will also encourage collaboration between businesses in offering services to walkers such as transport shuttles, catering and accommodation.



Wollumbin mountain view (Andy Fay/DPE)

5. The walkers

Evidence from around the world shows that demand for experiences that connect people back to nature are increasing exponentially. The multi-day Gidjoom Gulganyi Walk will provide an outstanding and immersive natural experience.

Market research¹ indicates that 75% of people surveyed would consider undertaking an overnight walk in a national park. More than half of these people have never done an overnight walk before, about 25% have done an overnight walk before, and about 10% regularly do walks that involve an overnight stay.

5.1 Avid bushwalkers

The multi-day walk will appeal to avid bushwalkers seeking nature-based adventures and outdoor activities, as well as less experienced walkers needing support services and international walkers needing to hire gear.

These walkers will be attracted to the opportunity to spend quality time in a relatively remote natural environment and the physical challenge the walk provides. The basic camps will appeal to these walkers, whether they are independent or guided.

These walkers seek out immersive experiences featuring stunning views, waterfalls and lookouts. They also want to be informed and inspired by state-of-the-art interpretation.

While being adventure seekers, these visitors still expect basic facilities like toilets, shelters and seating; and expect tracks and trails to be well maintained.

The Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project delivers on all these expectations.

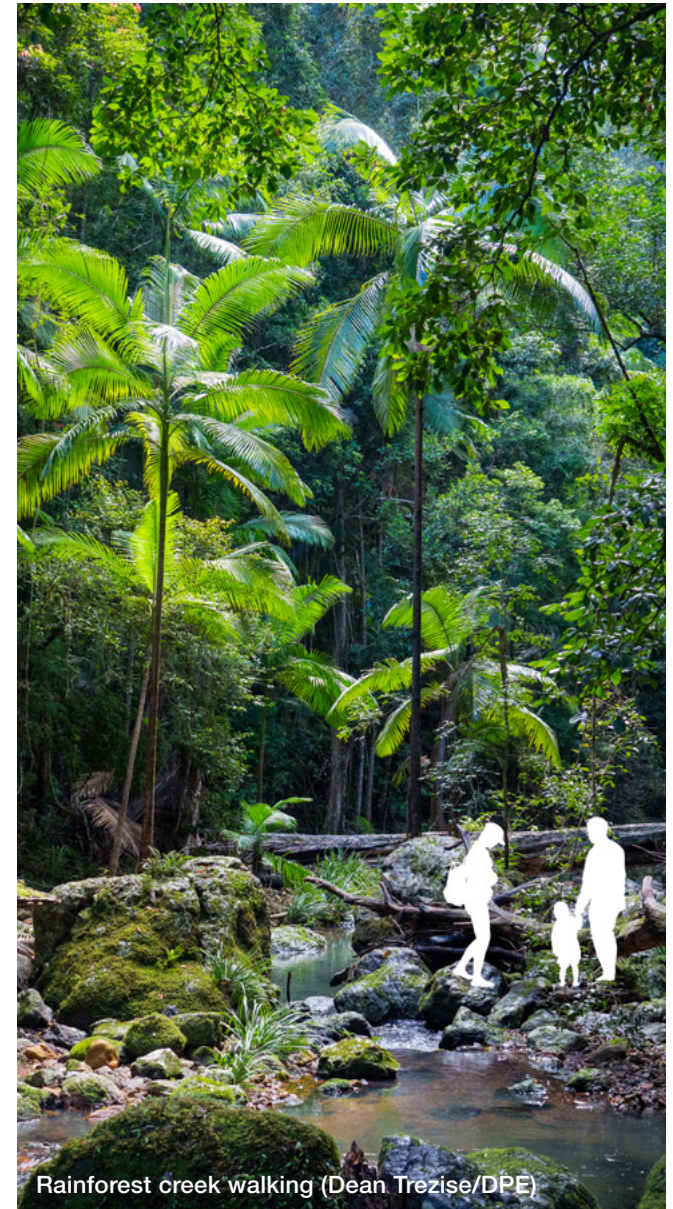
With adventure travels trending upwards, people are seeking ‘bucket list’ experiences, accomplishments and a personal sense of adventure, wellbeing and achievement. This multi-day walk provides all of these and adds a new dimension to the attractions of the NSW North Coast by enabling the packaging together of coastal with hinterland adventure experiences. The natural beauty of the area adds a dimension and additional offering for the North Coast which is best known for beaches, food and festivals.

It is envisaged that the multi-day walk will attract local, domestic and international markets, in time becoming a destination attraction for international visitors.

5.2 Families and friends

The short walks accessible from the Unicorn Falls car park and Minyon Falls picnic area will attract families and friends on a day out seeking walks suitable for a range of abilities.

These walkers will have the opportunity to enjoy picnic areas, spectacular lookouts, wildlife encounters and engaging interpretation in an easily accessible natural environment.



Rainforest creek walking (Dean Trezise/DPE)

6. The experience

What to expect

An invigorating and immersive multi-day walk that traverses the ancestral lands of the Widjabal Wia-bal and Minjungbal people of the Bundjalung Nation, passing through ancient rainforest, old-growth eucalypt forest and rocky tea-tree scrub. Walkers will marvel at the spectacular scenery, taking in the surrounding mountains and peaks of the caldera as well as sweeping views of the coast. Abundant wildlife and beautiful cascades and creeks are encountered along the way. Walkers experience a sense of solitude and escape, as well as adventure and achievement.



Boggy Creek, Whian Whian SCA (John Spencer/DPE)

6.1 The walk experience

The 3-night, 4-day Gidjoom Gulganyi Walk traverses 39-kms of (mostly) grade 4 tracks linking Mount Jerusalem National Park, Whian Whian State Conservation Area and Nightcap National Park. Grade 4 tracks are suited to self-reliant, experienced bushwalkers (or guided walkers) and only basic directional signage is provided along the way. There are an additional 12.2-kms of optional short walks and side tracks which add to the walking experience.

Walkers will travel in one direction, beginning at the Unicorn Fall car park in the north and finishing at spectacular Minyon Falls in the south. People undertaking the walk will need to book and pay camping fees (yet to be decided).

Each camp will cater for 22 people, and feature 2 separate areas:

- independent walkers camp – designed to accommodate 10 independent walkers
- guided experiences camp – designed to accommodate 12 walkers (e.g., 10 guided walkers and their 2 licensed guides).

A range of associated services will be available to support and add value to the multi-day walk experience. These may include, but not be limited to, licensed commercial tour operators offering various levels of assistance to individuals or groups, including pack-free walking and catered walks, and tours and experiences pre- and post-walk.

NPWS will seek to license a shuttle bus service to transport independent and guided walkers from airports and nearby towns to the trail head and then pick them up at the end of the walk. Pick-up and drop-off points and the appropriate size shuttle bus will be determined during the Expression of Interest for commercial services phase. A shuttle bus service would provide a seamless connection from key tourism locations and small communities. It would also reduce traffic congestion and improve parking capacity and security by providing an alternative option to private motor vehicles.

NPWS will foster partnership opportunities to enhance Aboriginal interaction and experiences. Potential opportunities, to be determined in consultation with Aboriginal custodians, include welcome to Country, guided walks, storytelling, learning about the ancestral lands of the Widjabal Wia-bal and Minjungbal People (Bundjalung Nation), and interpretation of cultural heritage.



Fungus, Mount Jerusalem National Park (Dean Trezise/DPE)

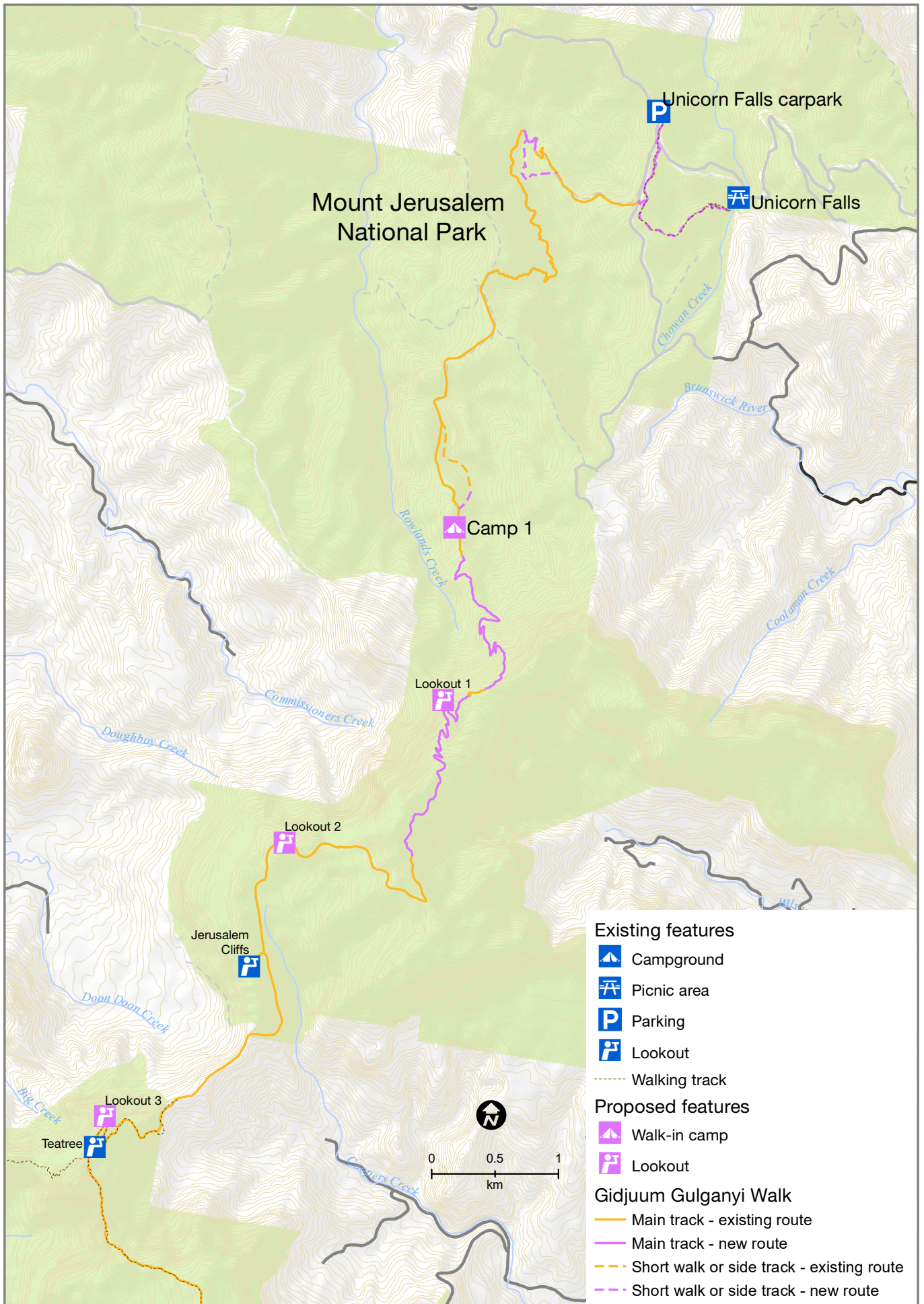


Figure 4 Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk – north section

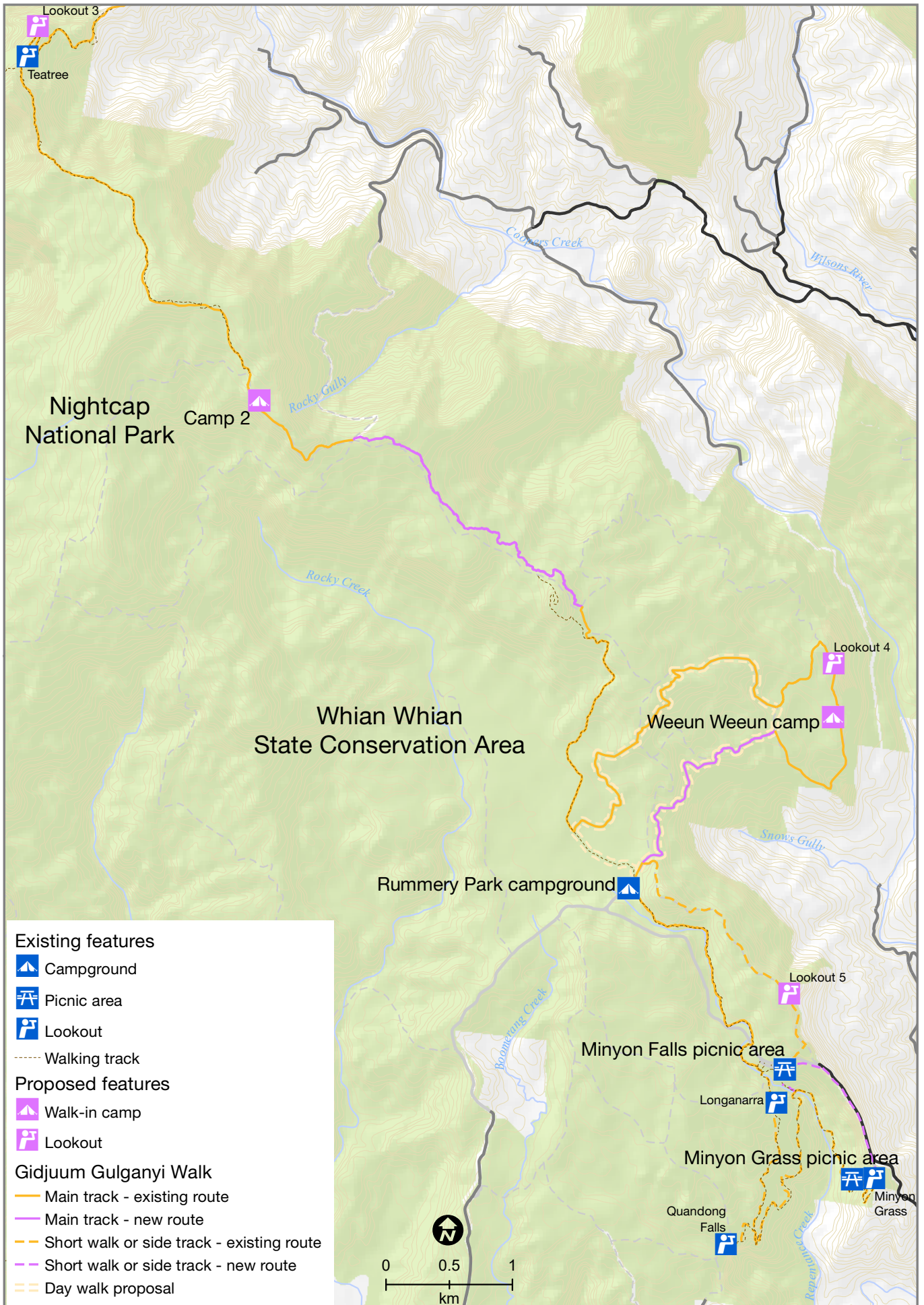


Figure 5 Gidjoom Gulganyi Walk – south section

Walk elevation

The 3-night, 4-day Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk ranges in elevation from 120 m to 830 m above sea level as shown below. Day 2 is the longest and steepest day, ascending the Koonyum Range and Jerusalem Mountain, and then climbing again from the Doon Doon saddle up to the Nightcap Range.

Walk distances

Daily distances on the walk are:

- Day 1 – 7-kms plus 5.6 km side walks
- Day 2 – 14.7-kms plus 500 m side walk
- Day 3 – 11.4-kms
- Day 4 – 5.9-kms plus side walk options

Walk route

A small section of the proposed multi-day walking track occurs on private land, on Doon Doon saddle between Mount Jerusalem and Nightcap national parks. The route of the track between the parks is subject to an easement agreement with the landowner.

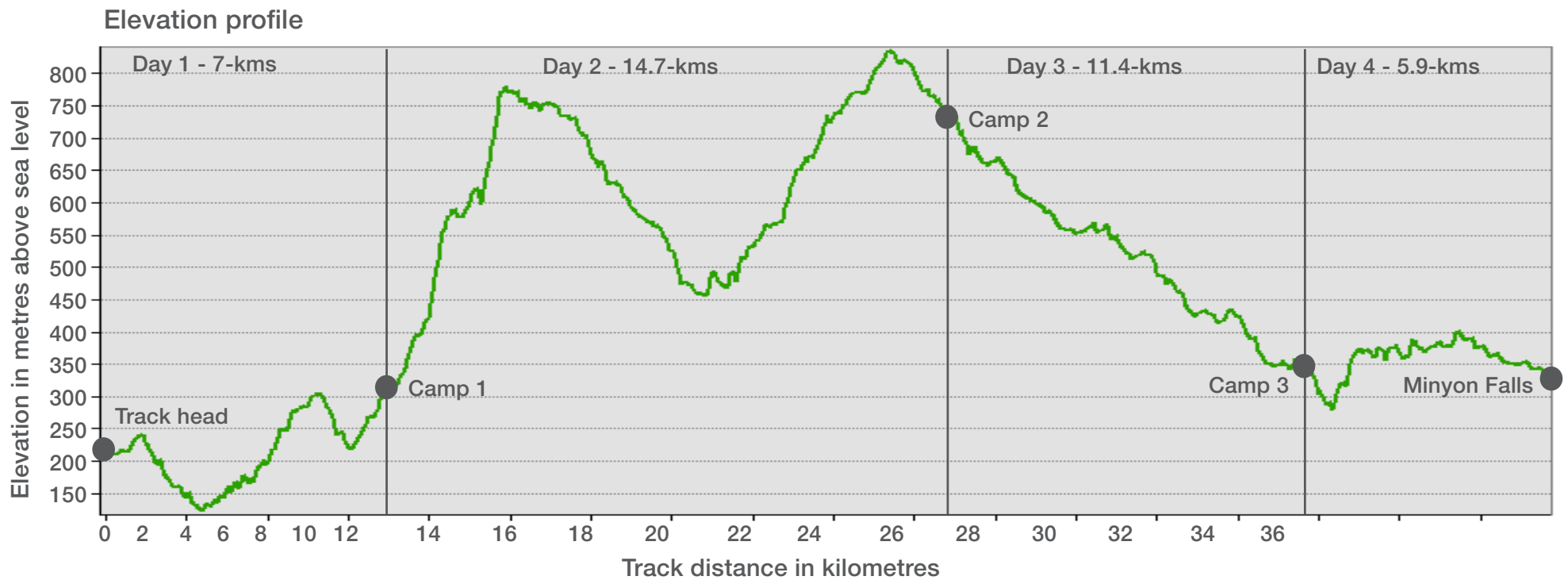


Figure 6 Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk – elevation profile

6.2 Unicorn Falls car park

The new Unicorn Falls car park located on Manns Road will act as the trail head for the multi-day walk and serve as a drop-off point.

The trail head will feature a range of facilities for day visitors and walkers, including visitor information, parking and a toilet accessible for people with a disability.

Several walk options for day visitors are accessible from the trail head:

- Unicorn Falls walk (4.2-kms return) initially follows the multi-day walking track before descending down a side track through coachwood-dominated rainforest and wet sclerophyll forest to the falls.
- two longer options include following the side tracks off Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk towards the end of Whiskey Creek Trail or Scrub Trail. Both provide exceptional rainforest experiences.

6.3 Day 1: Unicorn Falls car park to Camp 1

The multi-day walk begins in eucalypt forest dominated by ironbark, tallowwood, grey gum and white mahogany. Walkers can take the 2.6-kms return side walk to Unicorn Falls or continue along the ridge line before joining Whiskey Creek Trail. An optional side track offers a loop walk at the end of Whiskey Creek Trail. After crossing the creek, walkers follow an old logging track, meandering through rainforest to the ridge top. A little further on the walk crosses Hell Hole Creek, where a side track (Scrub Trail) takes walkers to a series of cascades lined with riparian rainforest. The main track gradually ascends to Camp 1 situated on a lower saddle of the ridge.

Day 1 walking points:

- An undulating 7-km walk
- Gentle gradients, creek crossings, rainforest and eucalypt forest
- Optional side track to Unicorn Falls 2.6-kms return
- Optional side track to swim or lunch at Hells Hole Creek along Scrub Trail
- Optional side track off Whiskey Creek Trail



Cascades at Whiskey Creek (Dean Trezise/DPE)

6.4 Day 2: Camp 1 to Camp 2

From Camp 1, walkers gradually climb to the western end of Koonyum Range, a 400 m ascent. At the top of the range, Lookout 1 offers a chance to rest, with stunning views to Wollumbin across Mount Jerusalem National Park. The walk features ancient old-growth New England blackbutt forest before rising sharply to the eastern face of Jerusalem Mountain where subtropical rainforest dominates.

South of the mountain, walkers skirt through warm temperate rainforest and emerge back into eucalypt forest. Lookout 2 reveals panoramic views across Commissioners Creek Valley with the ever-present Wollumbin in the distance.

Further on, Jerusalem Cliffs Lookout is perched on a rocky clifftop and is the perfect place for a break to soak in the sunshine and views. It offers expansive panoramic views across Doon Doon Creek to Doughboy Mountain and the Pinnacle in Border Ranges National Park.

Walkers then leave Mount Jerusalem National Park, cross the Doon Doon saddle and arrive in Nightcap National Park. Two lookouts here offer views of the surrounding landscape, including one with spectacular views to the north over Mount Tarrawyra with Wollumbin in the distance.

After climbing up to the exposed, elevated, open rocky outcrops and tea-tree scrubs around Nightcap Bluff, walkers wind their way along the Historic Nightcap Track to Camp 2.

Day 2 walking points:

- A long 6 to 8 hour, 14.7-km walk
- Steep uphill walking with over 1000 steps and over 800 m of elevation to climb
- The track passes through rainforest, wet eucalypt forest and affords spectacular views to Wollumbin and the Tweed caldera
- Side track to Jerusalem Cliffs Lookout is 500 m return including a steep scramble
- Camp 2 offers sunset views towards Lismore



Views from the Jerusalem Cliffs Lookout (Dean Trezise/DPE)

6.5 Day 3: Camp 2 to Weeun Weeun Camp

Walkers continue along the descending ridgeline of the Nightcap Range towards Peates Mountain and eventually join Peates Mountain Track. From there the alignment follows former logging roads (now largely overgrown) before crossing Peates Mountain Road and linking up to Perlite Road before reaching the Eastern Firebreak.

Walkers pass the new Lookout 4 and its uninterrupted views across Coopers Creek to Goonengerry National Park, before reaching Weeun Weeun Camp on the edge of Wanganui Gorge.

Day 3 walking points:

- A moderate 11.4-km walk, taking 3-5 hours
- The track passes through wet and dry eucalypt forests and offers views across Coopers Creek to Goonengerry National Park
- Weeun Weeun Camp is perched above Wanganui Gorge



Creek in rainforest (John Spencer/DPE)

6.6 Day 4: Weeun Weeun Camp to Minyon Falls

From Weeun Weeun Camp, walkers finish with an undulating stroll through eucalypt forest with several creek crossings before the final trek to Minyon Falls.

The first section of Day 4 hugs the clifftop over Wanganui Gorge and Coopers Creek before looping around the head of Snows Gully Nature Reserve. From here walkers follow Boggy Creek Walk to Minyon Falls picnic area and on to the spectacular Minyon Falls Lookout, a fitting end to a fantastic four-day walk.

Walkers have the option of staying on at the nearby Rummery Park campground (back along the Boggy Creek Walk) or doing other walks in the Minyon Falls area.

Day 4 walking points:

- A 3-hour, 5.9-km walk
- Undulating walking through wet and dry eucalypt forests before arriving at the final destination of the walk, the 130 m high Minyon Falls
- Several short walks start from the Minyon Falls picnic area, varying in length from a few hundred metres to a full day



Minyon Falls, Nightcap National Park (John Spencer/DPE)

6.7 Minyon Falls visitor node

The walk ends at the top of Minyon Falls in Nightcap National Park. The picnic area here is a popular day use area and recent upgrades include: a new and safer viewing platform over the falls, an all-access pathway to the lookout, new toilets, additional car parks and picnic facilities. Interpretive displays will also be updated.

A number of new walking track sections are proposed to expand and enhance the walking opportunities in the Minyon Falls area, both for day visitors and walkers who have completed the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk.

Minyon Falls Walk

The Minyon Falls Walk will be a spectacular 6.7-km day walk starting at Minyon Falls picnic area and passing Longanarra and Quandong Falls lookouts on the clifftop. From here, the track plunges into dense rainforest encompassing a

spectacular stand of old-growth brush box on the western side of Repentance Creek. A side track takes walkers to the pool at the base of the 130 metre-high falls. Back on the main track, the walk heads downstream before zigzagging up to Minyon Grass picnic area. From here, a proposed new walking track will shadow Minyon Falls Road and take walkers back to Minyon Falls picnic area.

The commencement of works on the Minyon Falls Loop Walk has been delayed due to major landslips that occurred in 2022, and the walk will no longer be progressing as part of the Tweed Byron Hinterland Trails project.

Rummery Park Loop walks

Diverse vegetation, great views over Wanganui Valley and historic heritage at Rummery Park make these 2 walks great options.

The first is a 7 kilometre loop that links Minyon Falls and Rummery Park, taking walkers along Boggy Creek Walk (also part of the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk), returning via Eastern Boundary Trail. Boggy Creek Walk follows a rainforest-lined creek, leading to blackbutt forest at Rummery Park. The track passes a series of small cascades and pools. On the return journey, walkers will follow Eastern Boundary Trail through dry eucalypt forest featuring views from the ridgeline lookout out across Upper Coopers Creek.

The second loop follows Peates Mountain Track until it intersects with Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk north of Rummery Park. From here walkers follow Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk through a variety of landscapes before returning to Rummery Park.

No separate new sections of track are required for either walk as they both follow existing walking tracks or part of Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk.

Longanarra Lookout

This short, one-hour walk is along existing tracks from Minyon Falls picnic area to Longanarra Lookout and return. The walk features spectacular views of the waterfall from different angles and sweeping views over the rainforest valley below.

This walk and the construction of the at-grade lookout will be completed at the same time as works on the Minyon Falls Loop Walk are progressed.



Minyon Falls through trees (Andy Fay/DPE)

7. Tracks, trails and associated infrastructure

Great care has been taken to ensure that the tracks, camps and lookouts have minimal impact on natural and cultural values. This minimal impact approach, which allows the natural elements to dictate the route, reduces the need for extensive new walking track construction. Around 75% of the walk is along existing walking tracks and trails (i.e., park management trails, old logging trails and snig tracks).

The development of the multi-day Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk and associated short walks and side tracks will require a number of construction and installation works. These works are briefly described in this section of the master plan. More information is provided in the detailed review of environmental factors (GeoLINK 2022).



Fringed lily (GeoLINK/DPE)

What is proposed:

- The signature, multi-day walking track is approximately 39-kms including:
 - 28.4-kms of existing walking tracks and trails (i.e., park management trails, old logging and snig tracks)
 - 10.8-kms of proposed new walking track.
- There are an additional 15.2-kms of short walks and side tracks associated with the multi-day walk including:
 - 10-kms of existing tracks
 - 2.1-kms of new walking track.
- Three new remote, walk-in camps will be established to service walkers and will provide basic facilities.
- Five new lookouts will be established along the track and the two existing lookouts will be enhanced.

7.1 Construction of new walking tracks

New sections of track will link existing walking tracks and trails along the route of the Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk. Figures 4 and 5 show the track alignment, however, minor adjustments may be made during construction.

The short walks and side tracks off Whiskey Creek Trail and Hells Hole Creek along Scrub Trail (Day 1), Jerusalem Cliffs Lookout (Day 2) and Lookout 4 (Day 3), are all on existing roads or logging roads, so no minimal works are required.

In summary:

- New sections of walking track are proposed as follows (see Figures 4 and 5):
 - Gidjuum Gulganyi Walk
 - 10.8-kms of new track to link existing tracks and trails
 - Minyon Falls Loop Walk (not progressing as part of the current project)
 - 1250 m of new track linking Minyon Grass picnic area to Minyon Falls picnic area
 - 150 m of new track to the base of falls (formalising an existing rough track).
- New tracks will generally be 600 mm wide, consistent with a grade 4 walking track (i.e., a hiking track with a natural surface and only basic signposting).
- Approximately 5 kilometres of the track in Nightcap National Park is within the current boundaries of the Gondwana Rainforests of Australia World Heritage property.

7.2 Construction of 3 new camps

Three new remote, walk-in camps will provide basic facilities for walkers. Each camp is split into two areas: one for independent walkers and one for guided walkers. Figures 7-9 provide plans of the 3 camps.

The camp infrastructure is designed to accommodate 22 people per day at each camp. This will allow for a sustainable number of low-impact visitors to experience the camps.

In summary, the following facilities are proposed for each of the 3 camps:

- remote composting toilet
- skillion timber shelter with water tanks for drinking water and handwashing
- picnic tables and incidental bespoke furniture
- 11 camping platforms to cater for a mix of independent walkers and guided experiences.

Small-scale disturbance will be needed to install facilities and some removal or modification of vegetation may be required.

In consultation with Widjabul Wia-bal native title holders, the third camp has been named Weeun Weeun, meaning “home of the cleverman” (pronounced wee-ahn wee-ahn). Camps 1 and 2 will also be named in consultation with Aboriginal custodians.

Open fires will not be permitted at any of the camps, consistent with their designation as remote camps.

Camp 1

Located on Sand Ridge Trail

LEGEND

- Track
- Yarning circle
- Camping platform
- Shelter
- Remote toilet

Contour interval 0.2m

Scale 0 5 10 metres

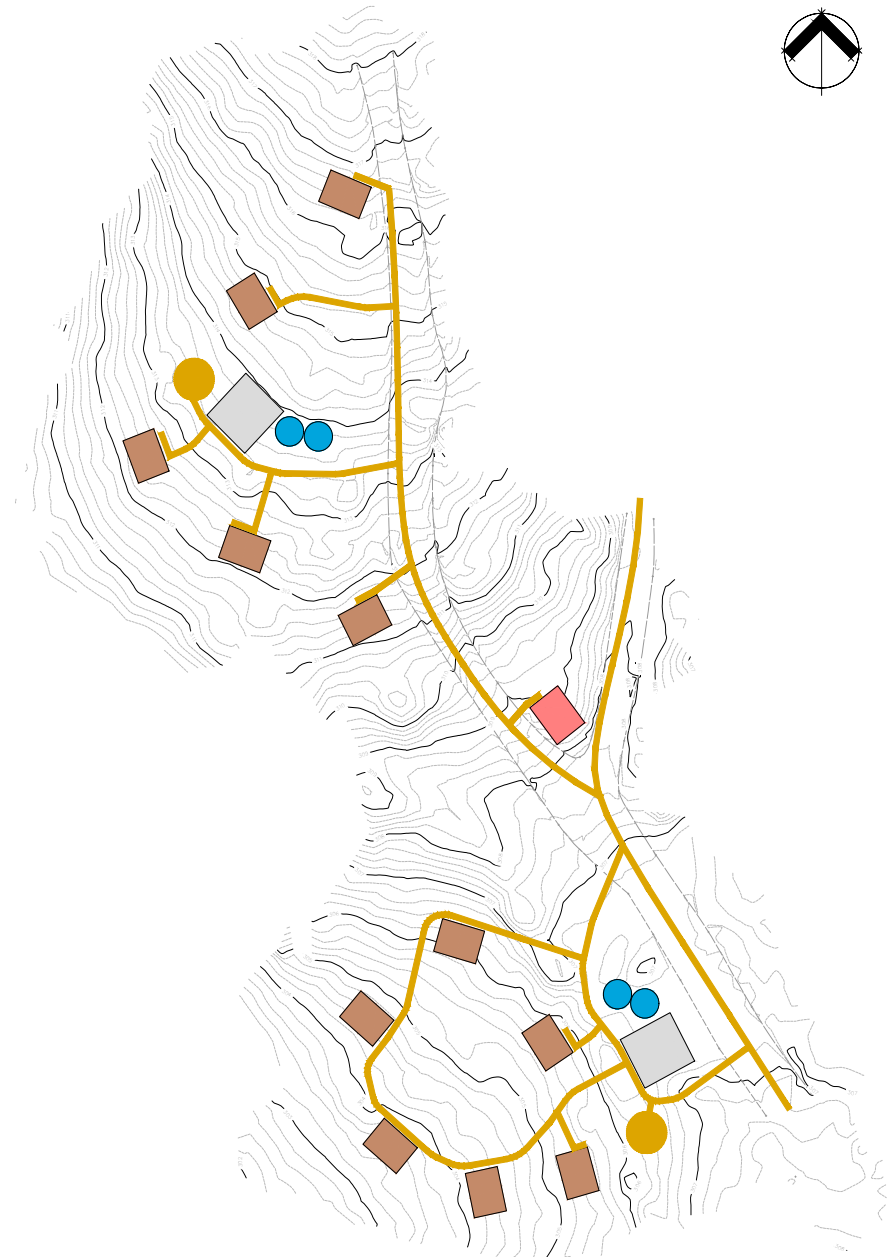


Figure 7 Concept plan for Camp 1

Camp 2

Located on Gibbergunyah Trail

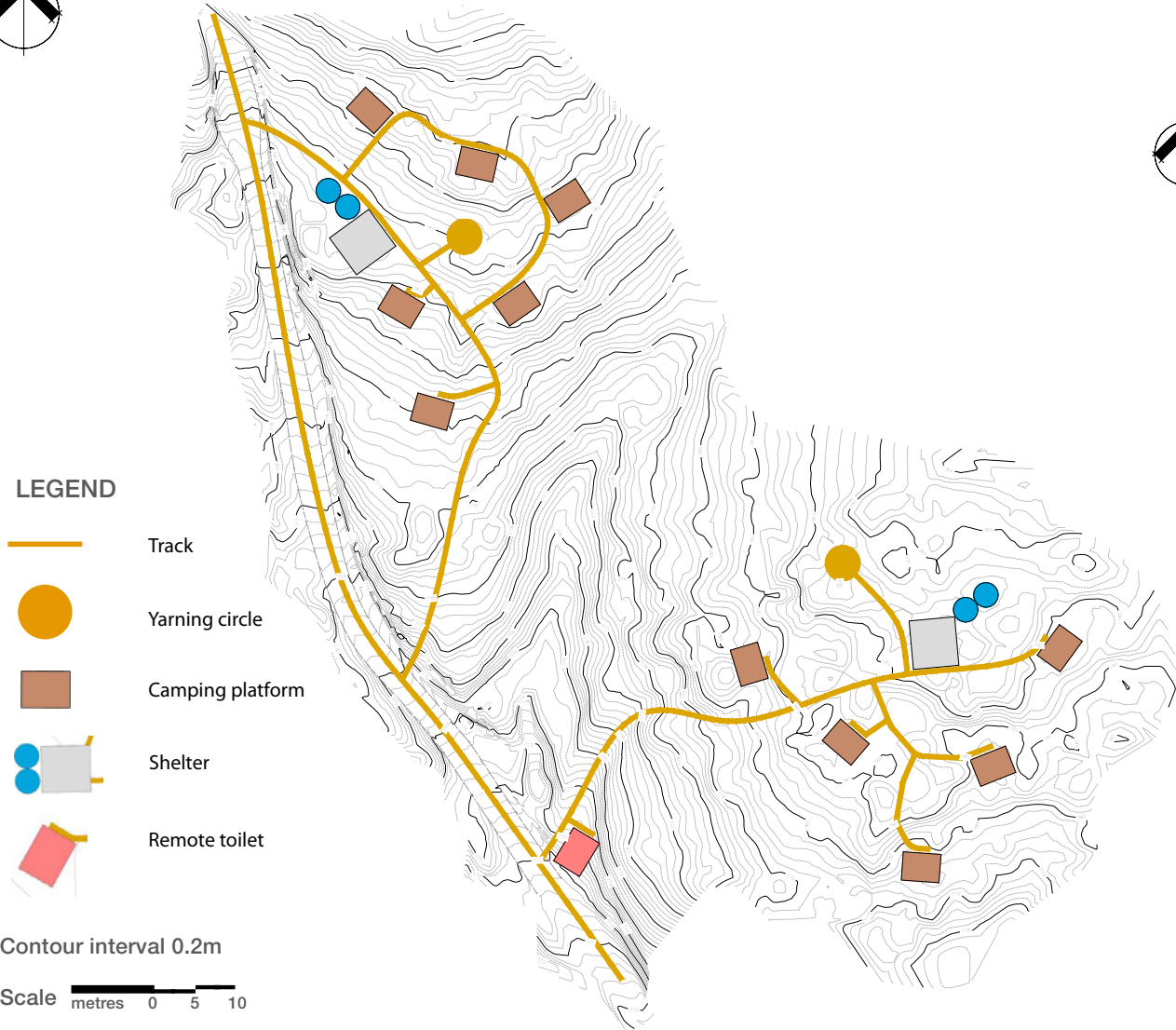


Figure 8 Concept plan for Camp 2

Weeun Weeun Camp 3

Located on Eastern Fire Break

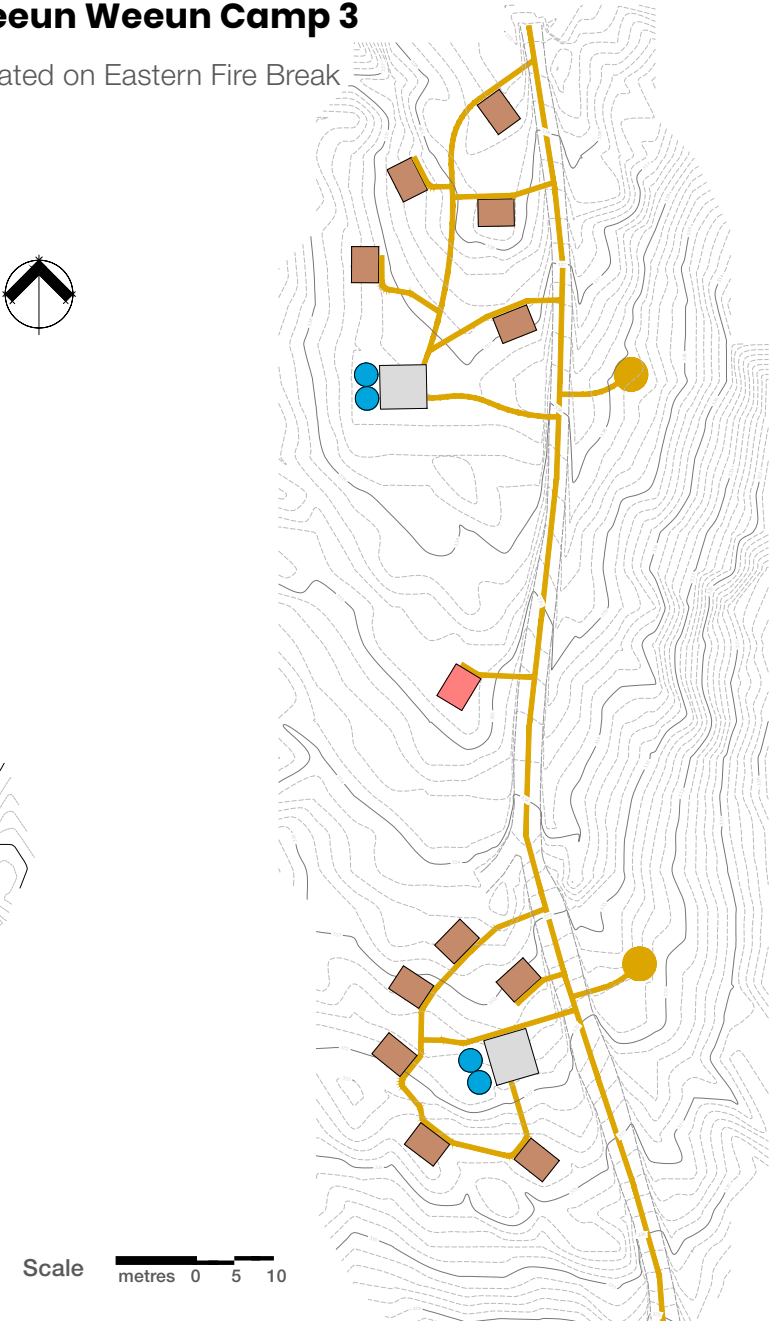


Figure 9 Concept plan for Weeun Weeun Camp

7.3 Lookouts

There are 2 existing lookouts along the walking route which will need to be maintained and 5 new lookouts are proposed (see Figures 4 and 5). Each new lookout will require minor disturbance and installation of a seat and will be named in consultation with Aboriginal custodians.

7.4 Other track works

A number of other works are needed along the track, including:

- installation of simple bespoke seats
- installation of signs, posts and track markers
- installation of 4 shoe-cleaning stations
- repairs to sections of existing park management roads, trails and bridges
- upgrades to existing roads to enable access for construction and ongoing maintenance of the proposed facilities.

Horse riding and mountain bike riding are permitted on a short section of Gibbergunyah Trail between Historic Nightcap Track and the North Rocks Road intersection, which will remain a shared trail with walkers.

Horse riding and mountain bike riding will no longer be permitted along Eastern Firebreak where these activities coincide with the multi-day walk to reduce potential conflicts and safety risks.

7.5 Improved interpretation

Interpretation is a critical part of the visitor experience. New and upgraded interpretation along the walk and at Minyon Falls will enrich

Aboriginal cultural storytelling and present information on the area's unique natural values.

The interpretation strategy (under development) will seek to:

- increase visitors' understanding, awareness and appreciation of natural and cultural heritage
- communicate messages relating to nature and culture, including natural and historical processes, ecological relationships and human roles in the environment

- involve people in nature and history through first-hand (personal) experience with the natural and cultural environment
- affect the behaviour and attitudes of the public concerning the wise use of natural resources, the preservation of culture and heritage, and respect and concern for the natural and cultural environment
- provide an enjoyable and meaningful experience
- increase the public's understanding and support for NPWS's role, its management objectives and policies



Boardwalk at Nightcap National Park (John Spencer/DPE)

7.6 Example infrastructure

To enable immersion within nature, careful thought must be given to the location and style of structural items to reflect the site character such as topography, geology and vegetation. The intention of the bespoke natural furniture design is to provide strong local references that distinguish the sites and reflect the local character.



Figure 10 Example of using natural

Creation of natural seating will be dependent on site specific characteristics and materials. The intention will be to utilise what is readily available and this will guide and influence the onsite design of some of the furniture options.



Figure 11 Example of using natural materials for seats



Figure 12 Example of using natural materials for seats



Figure 13 Example of tent platform



Figure 14 Example of single stall toilet for camps

8. More information

[Destination North Coast, 2022, North Coast Destination Management Plan 2022 to 2030.](#)

Destination NSW 2016, Travel to North Coast NSW region: Year ended June 2016.

Northern Rivers Regional Economic Development Strategy, Fire Impact Addendum, p.10.

Review of Environmental Factors; NPWS Tweed Byron Hinterland Trail (GeoLINK 2020). Addendums 2022/23.

NPWS 2019, Minyon Falls Master Plan, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/walking-tracks-and-trails-in-national-parks/tweed-byron-hinterland-trails/minyon-falls-master-plan

NPWS 2021, Unicorn Falls Master Plan, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/park-management/community-engagement/walking-tracks-and-trails-in-national-parks/tweed-byron-hinterland-trails/unicorn-falls-master-plan

NPWS 2019, Parks and Reserves of the Tweed Caldera Plan of Management, first adopted in 2004 and amended in 2010 and 2019, NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Environment and Conservation, www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/parks-and-reserves-of-the-tweed-caldera-plan-of-management.

Endnotes

- 1 *Tweed Byron Hinterland Trail Market Research*, Instinct and Reason, December 2019.

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