

## 9: Berowra Waters Walk

Berowra to Berowra Waters, one way

For those taking the train to Berowra Station, this walk may also be started from Crowley Road at the junction with Berowra Waters Road. This section is described at the end of the Lyrebird Gully walk 'Zigzag steps summit to Crowley Road', written for walkers heading towards Berowra.

### Route:

Berkeley Close to Berowra Waters

Distance: 3.6 km

Grade: Moderate, with three steep sections

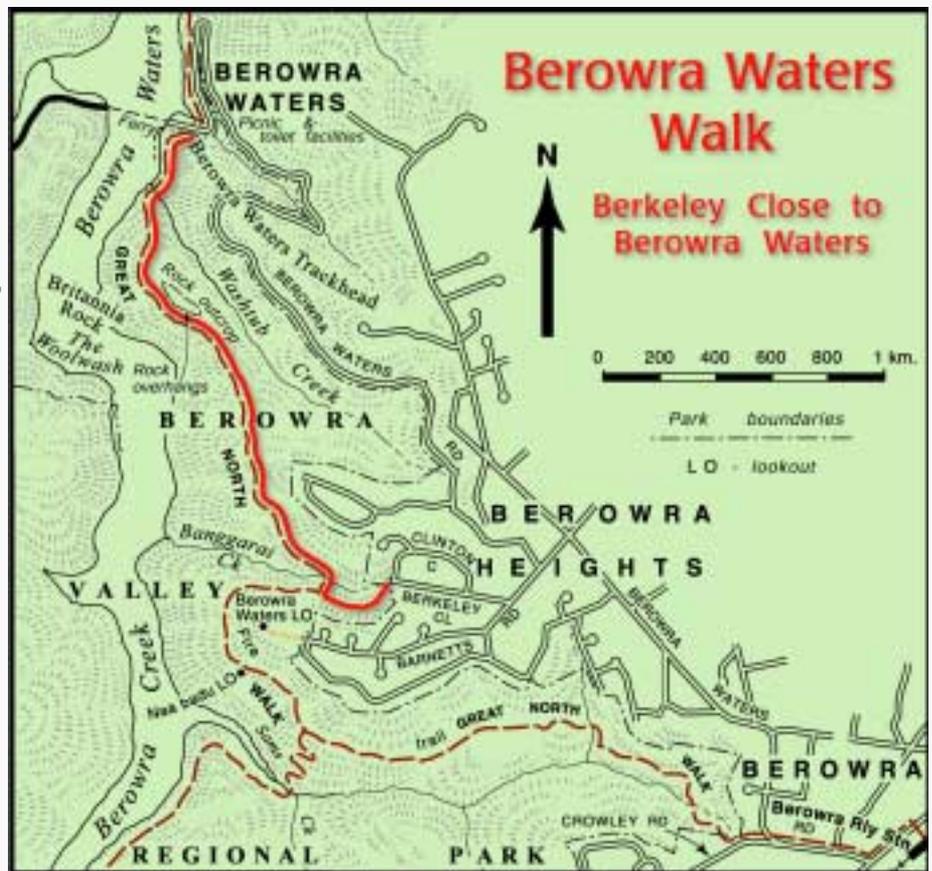
Time: 2–3 hrs

### Transport:

Two cars, one at each end

### Track status:

Official marked track, part of the Great North Walk



### Synopsis

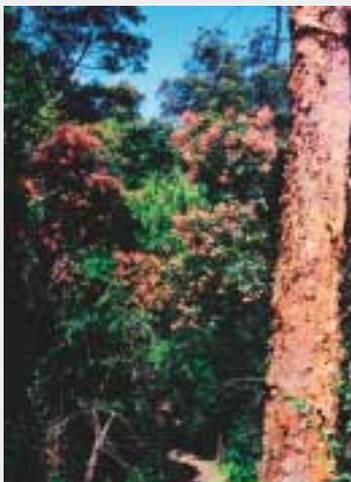
An upland walk offering fine views over Berowra Creek, finishing with a steep descent to the water's edge followed by a short walk to the ferry crossing at Berowra Waters.

## BEROWRA WATERS WALK GUIDE

### Fire trail to Great North Walk turn-off

This westward walk starts as a fire trail at the bottom of Berkeley Close. The walk follows Banggarai<sup>1</sup> Creek, a tributary of Berowra Creek Catchment. This watercourse is part of the Hawkesbury-Nepean System. The fire trail descends steeply over some 400 m to the Berowra Waters turn-off. The canopy thins overhead, with Black Sheoaks *Allocasuarina littoralis*, Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata* and such eucalypts as Sydney Peppermint *Eucalyptus piperita*, Grey Gums *Eucalyptus punctata* and Broad-leaved Scribbly Gum *Eucalyptus*

1. *Banggarai* is a Sydney Aboriginal language word meaning Swamp Wallaby.



Jeremy Steele

Christmas Bush *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* and Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata* shedding bark as it adds another growth ring



Jeremy Steele

Steel rung steps at the top of a steep section



Jamie Wright

Waratah *Telopea speciosissima* bud

*haemastoma*. Christmas Bush *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* can be seen flowering red at the end of the year. On the ridge on the left an eroded sandstone overhang introduces a length of cliff face.

#### Great North Walk turn-off to ridge-top

So far the walk has been along a wide fire trail. In order to proceed to Berowra Waters, take the narrow bush track on the right, descending towards Banggarai Creek. (The fire trail continuing onwards is from this point also part of the Great North Walk, leading to Crosslands and beyond.) Although the narrow bush track may seem a minor path, it is in fact part of the Great North Walk: it descends for about fifty log and rock steps to the creek, which is crossed by a timber footbridge.

The track rises out of the moist gully passing through Umbrella Ferns *Sticherus flabellatus* and River Rose *Bauera rubioides*. Here, in spring, Pale-pink Boronia *Boronia floribunda* and orchids are in bloom.

After following the creek's northern flank for about 200 m, the track gently rises and the moist gully is replaced by drier sandy country. The trunk of a 2 m-wide eucalypt, reduced to a shell, is a landmark. After a second creek bed, the track rises strenuously up the sandstone side of the valley assisted by some 60 log steps and a couple of iron U-treads set in the rock. Beside the path, boulders are being forced apart, infinitely slowly, by the roots of a Sydney Red Gum *Angophora costata*.

A pause at the top offers a view across to neighbouring ridges, dotted with occasional housing and open grassland.

Broad-leaved Scribbly Gums *Eucalyptus haemastoma*, recognisable by their white bark, mark the top of the climb, followed shortly after by a signpost marker indicating that the main track proceeds to the left (the track to the right connects to Currawong Road). Thirty metres later a rock outcrop offers a scenic place for a refreshment stop.

#### Ridge-top to flat-rock lookout

Yellow Bloodwoods *Corymbia eximia*, recognisable by their flaky bark, mark another change in the soil. These trees are characteristic of poor sandstone soils on ridge-tops. The track, after a gentle beginning and a short steep section, at once begins to descend back towards Berowra Creek. Here are *Banksia*, the geebung *Persoonia pinifolia*, Mountain Devil *Lambertia formosa*, native peas, grass trees *Xanthorrhoea* and an occasional Waratah *Telopea speciosissima*, as well as the first glimpses of the expanses of Berowra Creek way below.

More water views soon follow, and more *Allocasuarina* as the track continues its gradual descent. Another valley, known as Washtub Gully, joins on the right, the track running along a ridge between the two. The distant sound of cars on Berowra Waters Road may be heard.

Along this part of the walk, a sandstone cliff-face 6–10 m high rises on the upper side of the track and stretches for over 100 m. Among several interesting formations is a picturesque cavernous scalloped overhang with finely iron oxide-banded sandstone in honey-brown and white.

Soon Christmas Bush *Ceratopetalum gummiferum* begins to reappear, marking a change in the habitat.

Shortly after this the panoramic vistas of the broad expanses of Berowra Creek increase in frequency, eventually to reveal the housing and boats of the Berowra Waters settlement. Close to here, on the shore opposite Britannia Rock, is an area called the Woolwash. Here settlers from Arcadia, Dural and Castle Hill used to bring wool by boat to wash it in the strongly flowing spring water.

Through the trees walkers may spot the car ferry making one of its regular trips.

### Lookout to the ferry

Shortly afterwards the track drops sharply. Timber and stone steps ease the route. At one point a rocky overhang and seat below offer a rest with a view of Berowra Waters.

Soon the water's edge is reached. Black Sheoaks *Allocasuarina littoralis* and Red Bloodwood *Corymbia Gummifera* and Yellow Bloodwood *Corymbia eximia* are present, and thickets of Common Hop Bush *Dodonaea triquetra* occur.

As the track proceeds downstream to the settlement, an extensive Aboriginal midden of oyster shells recalls the usage of this place by the previous occupants. Shell middens such as this are sites of cultural significance, and are protected under State government legislation.

A trickling waterfall signals the creek of Washtub Gully, which obtained its name from two deep rock holes which, when filled with water, were used by early settlers for their washing.

The vegetation in Washtub Gully includes Water Gums *Tristaniopsis laurina*, Coachwoods *Ceratopetalum apetalum* and Black Wattles *Callicoma serratifolia*.

The walk along Berowra Creek features a further change in vegetation to Rough-barked Apple *Angophora floribunda*, Cheese Trees *Glochidion ferdinandi* and Forest Oak *Allocasuarina torulosa*. This area is also one of the few locations where a rare grass known as *Ancistrachne maidenii* is found.

Below the track close to the water is another significant natural feature known as Britannia Rock, named for its resemblance to Britannia's head. Aboriginal carvings in this area show a pilot fish over the top of a shark, matched by similar designs at the mouth of Berowra Creek.

Finally the road at the Berowra Waters Tea House and the punt is reached. Picnic facilities and toilets are nearby.



Overview of Berowra Waters ferry

George Foster



Common Hop Bush *Dodonaea triquetra*

Gregor Newton



Close to the end of the walk is a demonstration of outstanding tree engineering: a root system capable of holding several tonnes of horizontal *Angophora* for many years, and counting.

George Foster



The car ferry crosses Berowra Creek to link the extensive parking, picnic, restaurant and boating facilities that are located on both sides.

Paul Fredrickson