

Bushwalk: Mt Keira Ring Track

By Geoff Whale, author of *Northern Illawarra Beachwalks* (bcw.grwpub.info)

DISTANCE 6km to 11km, climb 250 to 500m.

DIFFICULTY Moderate to hard (summit).

SUMMARY Classic track with variations.

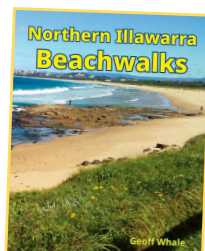
HAZARDS Stinging trees, leeches after rain.

TRANSPORT Park at Byarong Park or at 5.

The track can be traversed in the easier clockwise direction or anticlockwise as described; the profile shows where the steep sections occur. Can extend to Robertson's Lookout (2.5km return) or to the summit (*experienced walkers only*, 2.4km return).

From Byarong Park follow the signs to the ring track 1, turn right for anticlockwise. Take care crossing the road, drop a little and rejoin the road at Geordies Flat. Ascend on formed steps then through rocks to a wide amphitheatre. 2 Turn sharply right downhill to a long, level section. Watch out for giant stinging trees (*Dendrocnide excelsa*). They have large heart-shaped leaves, often perforated by insects, and covered in hairs that deliver an intense and long-lasting sting.

Pass the marked Mount Pleasant Track and ascend many steep steps 3 to another flat section.



Drop through rainforest and cross a stream 4 before reaching the road again. Avoiding any traffic, descend steel steps to a T junction. 5 Right is the (optional) lookout track, beginning with a steep and moist rocky path, then mostly flat. Return the same way.

The main track descends steadily back to the start. Dave Walsh's Track to the summit is a highlight though it's rated *hard*. It begins on the south side of the road 6 but becomes indistinct at 7 as you pick your way through large boulders. At the top there's an unfenced lookout and a group of indigenous sculptures near Five Islands Lookout, 8 undercut by a rockfall in 2012 and now closed. Geera (the mountain) and her 5 sisters, the islands offshore, are daughters of the West Wind. If you skip the tricky climb, afterwards drive to the summit and take the 0.7km loop track via lookout 9 to view the artworks. *

