

Forest Track, Illawarra Escarpment

by Geoff Whale, author of *Northern Illawarra Beachwalks* bcw.grwpub.info

DISTANCE 16km one way, early exit options.

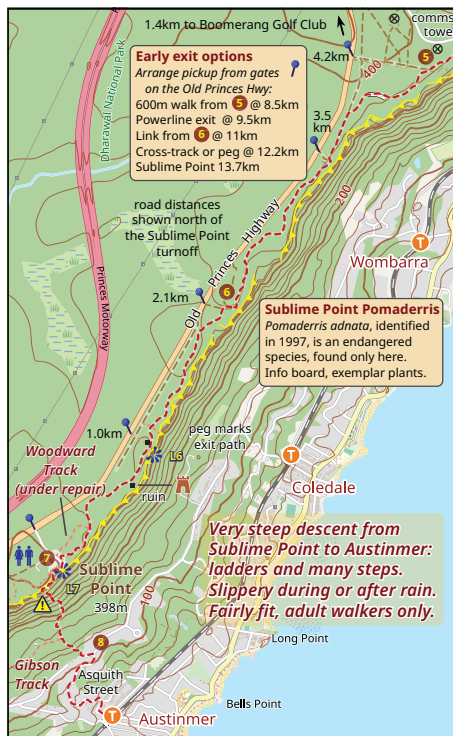
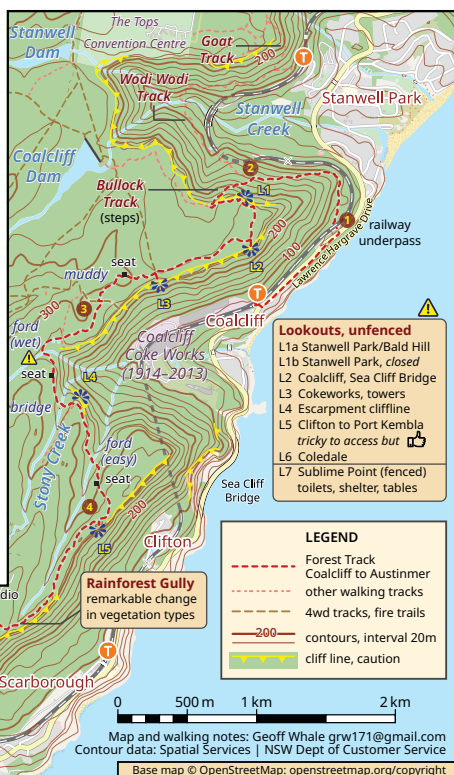
DIFFICULTY Moderate with hard descent.

SUMMARY Iconic full day walk up, along and down the escarpment, many lookouts; changes in vegetation types. Birdwatching.

HAZARDS Unfenced lookouts, one tricky water crossing, fatigue, difficult descent.

TRANSPORT Starts at Coalcliff train station, walk through to Austinmer station.

Walk north to the start of the Wodi Wodi Track 1 on Lawrence Hargrave Drive. It's an easy climb along a damp, weedy track to the marked junction 2. Climb the steep steps recently rebuilt by NPWS. Note the dramatic change to dry forest at the sharp bend left onto the plateau at 280m elevation. Lookout L1a is on the left (L1b is closed), then a Y junction to L2 (see view list on map). After L3 the track becomes rocky but is not difficult. At 3 turn left onto Coke Works fire trail and then right after 20m. 4.5km walked so far.



Descend to the northern arm of Stony Creek through swathes of bracken. The creek flows over a wide flat rock, take care crossing. Climb over ridges to the two other (easy) crossings. 300m after the second seat is a path 4 to L5, the best on the walk. Push through gymea lilies and scramble left onto a rock for great views and lunch; you've come 7km.

After 1km the track drops to the sheltered, moist environment of Rainforest Gully, then emerges at a 4wd track 5, elevation 390m. Early pickup options start here, see map.

The next leg (5km) includes an endangered plant community 6; L6 just past a marker peg; a ruin from days past; and finally the tourist facilities at Sublime Point 7.

Take the fenced path to the steep 300m dry-weather rainforest descent via ladders and steep steps. Veer left at the sign 8 and follow Asquith Street/Balfour Road to the station.