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.

1.4km to Boomerang Golf Club

Sublime Point Pomaderris
Pomaderris adnata, identified

in 1997, is an endangered

species, found only here.
Info board, exemplar plants

Very steep descent from

ladders and many steps.

Long Point

Sublime Point to Austinmer:

Slippery during or after rain.

Fairly fit, adult walkers only.

Early exit options

Link from 6 @ 11km Cross-track or peg @ 12.2km

Sublime Point 13 7km

road distances shown north of

the Sublime Point

turnoff

Austinmer

Woodward

(under repair)

Sublime

Arrange pickup from gates

Track Wodi Wodi Stanwell Park Stanwell Búllock (steps) railway underpass Coalcliff Lookouts, unfenced L1a Stanwell Park/Bald Hill oke Works L1b Stanwell Park, closed 1914-2013 L2 Coalcliff, Sea Cliff Bridge L3 Cokeworks, towers L4 Escarpment cliffline L5 Clifton to Port Kembla tricky to access but L6 Coledale Sublime Point (fenced) Sea Cliff toilets, shelter, tables LEGEND Forest Track Coalcliff to Austinmer Rainforest Gully other walking tracks remarkable change in vegetation types 4wd tracks, fire trails contours interval 20m cliff line, caution 500 m Map and walking notes: Geoff Whale grw171@gmail.com Contour data: Spatial Services | NSW Dept of Customer Service Base map @ OpenStreetMap; openstre

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

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 dryweather rainforest descent via ladders and steep steps. Veer left at the sign ③ and follow Asquith Street/Balfour Road to the station.