

Self guided bushwalks

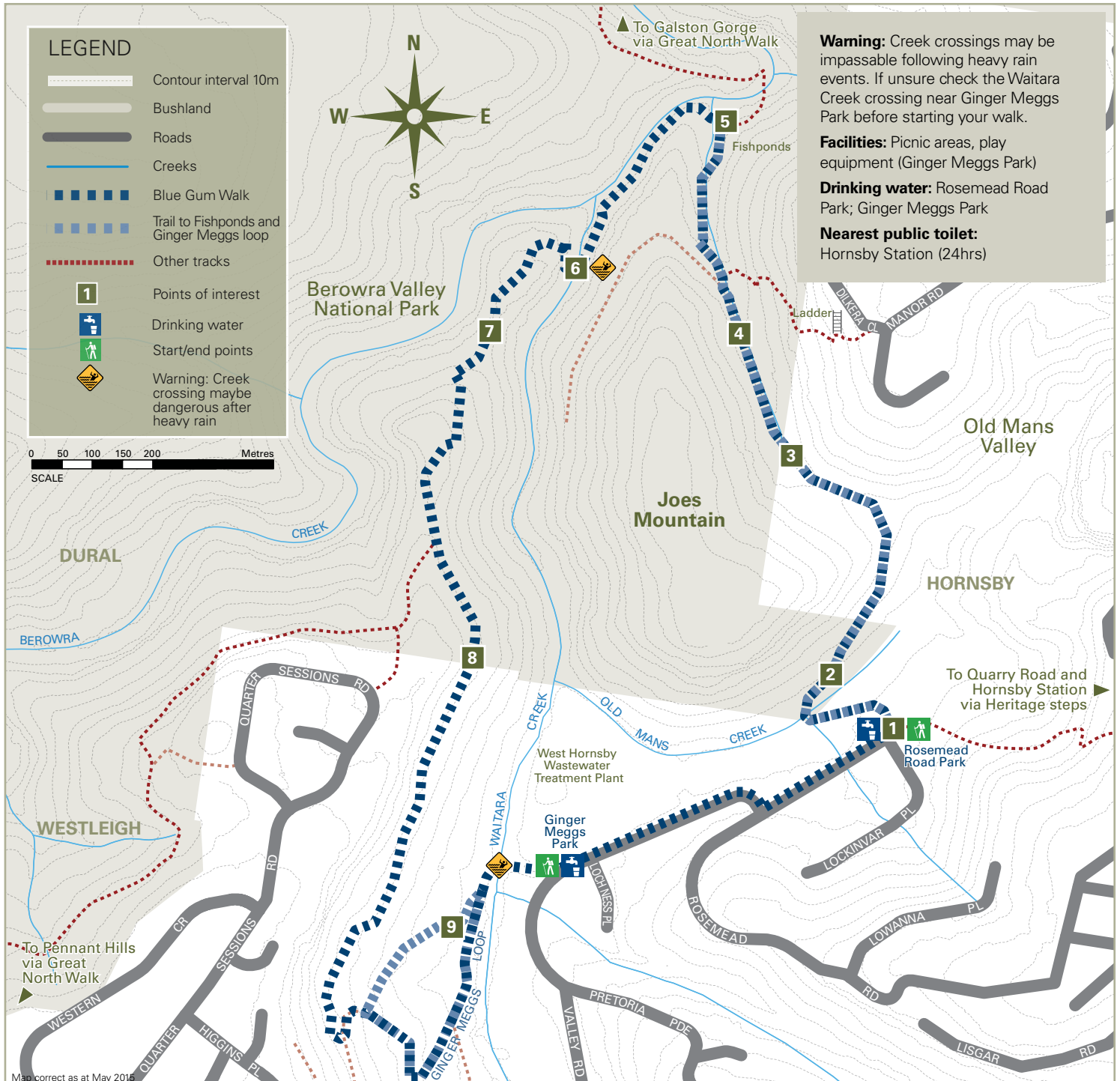
Blue Gum Walk

From tall, lush forest to rugged sandstone ridgetops, the **Blue Gum Walk** provides a diverse range of bushwalking experiences. The walk to **Fishponds** and the **Ginger Meggs Loop** sections are ideal for those new to bushwalking or who are simply looking for shorter walks.

DUE TO AREAS OF LIMITED MOBILE COVERAGE, DOWNLOAD THIS PDF BEFORE YOU BEGIN.

Important information

Location: Hornsby
Blue Gum Walk: 4km. Allow 2hrs 30mins
Fishponds: 2.4km return. Allow 1hr 30mins
Ginger Meggs Loop: 950m return. Allow 45min
Difficulty: Grade 3 (moderate)
Starting points:
 Rosemead Road Park (corner of Rosemead Road and Lockinvar Place, Hornsby)
 Ginger Meggs Park (24X Valley Road, Hornsby)
Getting there:
 Car <https://goo.gl/maps/DKnyU>
 Train <http://www.sydneytrains.info/>
 (25min walk from Hornsby Railway Station via Quarry Road and Heritage Steps)



Points of interest (for more information see overleaf)

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For more information visit hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushwalks



Points of interest

Blue Gum Walk

1 Sydney Blue Gums

The dominant tree in this area is the **Sydney Blue Gum** (*Eucalyptus saligna*). With its smooth slate-grey bark and rough, brown 'sock', it forms part of an extremely rare ecological community known as **Blue Gum Diatreme Forest**. As little as 14 hectares of this community remains in existence and may now be solely confined to the Hornsby local government area. It occurs here because of the deep clay soils, produced by the weathering of the volcanic rock of the **Hornsby diatreme** which is located under your feet.

Timber has been harvested in this valley from the 1820s right up until the 1960s, and the trees we see today are comparatively young natural regrowth.

Notice the wriggly markings on the smooth trunks?

These are made by Australia's largest native land slug, the **Red-triangle Slug** (*Triboniophorus graeffei*) as it grazes upon algae.

2 Sassafras

On the eastern side of the trail above Old Mans Creek, you may notice a dense grove of trees. They are commonly known as **Sassafras** (*Doryphora sassafras*) due to the pleasant scent of the leaves. This species is now very rare in the region and Hornsby Shire Council is currently undertaking restoration works in the area to assist with their growth and spread.

3 Joes Mountain

The large hill to the west of the trail is called **Joes Mountain**, though how it received its name is unclear. In 1967 the late Dr Joyce Vickery, a botanist with the Royal Botanic Gardens, donated over 100 acres (40.5 ha) of land around the hill for conservation, most of which forms part of Berowra Valley National Park.

At the foot of the hill on the western side of the trail is a large stand of **Turpentines** (*Syncarpia glomulifera*). As with the Sydney Blue Gums, these stringy-barked trees were also valued for their timber. Here they mark an end to the diatreme-derived soils.

4 Sydney Red Gum

A large and remarkable **Sydney Red Gum** (*Angophora costata*) is positioned on the eastern edge of the fire trail at this location. With its smooth pink or orange bark and distinctive contorted limbs, old trees such as these contain hollows which provide vital nesting sites for many native birds, mammals and insects. **Can you see any currently being used?** This tree is reported to have been hit by lightning.

5 The Fishponds

The Fishponds are a series of waterholes situated on a bend in Berowra Creek. Sit quietly for a while and keep your eye out for **Eastern long-necked turtle** (*Chelodina longicollis*), **Australian short-necked turtles** (*Emydura sp.*) and **Eastern Water Dragons** (*Intellagama lesueurii lesueurii*) as they bask on rocks or fallen logs. You may even catch a glimpse of a huge invasive **Common Carp** (*Cyprinus carpio*) as it swims lazily by.

6 Washtub

This crossing at Waitara Creek boasts lovely cascades and 'washtub' pools sculpted from the creek bed. Known as **Hawkesbury Sandstone**, this rock type underlies most of the Sydney region. Feel the sand and quartz grains laid down around 200 million years ago, when Sydney was a vast floodplain and dinosaurs roamed the earth.

7 Valley Views

This thin, high ridge separates Berowra Creek to the west from Waitara Creek to the east. Lovely views of Berowra Valley extend to the north and Joes Mountain sits to the east. The vegetation on this ridge is called Peppermint-Angophora Forest. One of the main canopy species here is the **Sydney Peppermint Gum** (*Eucalyptus piperita*). You may recognise this tree by its grey, rough bark, with ribbons of bark hanging off the upper branches. The leaves have a 'peppermint' smell, which is the reason for its common name.

8 Vegetation change

You may notice a change in the vegetation, as the trail moves from a dry exposed northerly slope to a more shady and moist southerly aspect. See if you can mark the place where the Sydney Blue Gums start appearing again.

9 English Oak Trees

Notice the row of English Oak trees along the Ginger Meggs Loop. These once lined the approach to an old dwelling that was situated on the flat clearing above.

RISK WARNING

Hornsby Shire Council has taken all care in producing these notes and map. Bushwalking can be hazardous. Trails are unsealed and you may encounter slippery or loose surfaces, creek crossings, fallen timber and sloping ground. Poisonous plants and animals or biting insects may be encountered. Snakes are rare but may be seen in warmer seasons. Please keep to designated trails. Dress for the conditions and wear sturdy shoes and a hat. Take plenty of water, food, sunscreen and always take a map.

Before leaving tell someone where you will be going and when you expect to return. Check the local weather forecast. Please do not undertake this walk during Total Fire Ban days. Check the Rural Fire Service website rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fdr-and-tobans or phone **1800 679 737** if you suspect a Total Fire Ban may be in force.

In case of emergency dial '000', but be aware that not all areas have reliable mobile reception.

For more information visit
hornsby.nsw.gov.au/bushwalks

