



**MENAI
WILDFLOWER
GROUP**



Nuclear-based science benefiting all Australians

**ANSTO buffer zone track
The Pink Walk**

Before starting out:

Let the Australian Federal Police on the ANSTO site know where and when you are going - ph 9717 3355 (as per AG1951). These tracks are rocky, uneven and at times slippery. Wear a hat, sunscreen and boots or sturdy shoes. Carry water and a mobile phone. Please stay away from the edge of the escarpment.

Length of walk and duration

The **Pink track** is the easiest of the ANSTO walks. It is 4kms long (can be abbreviated to 2 kms) and only rises 30 metres. Allow 1hr 30m at a relaxed walking pace. It traverses several vegetation types and offers views of the Woronora Valley. The track is marked with pink markers. Note that the **Orange track** follows the same course to the second marker where it turns to the right and descends into the Woronora Valley while the **Pink track** turns left and stays on top of the escarpment.

Starting Point

The starting point is the Ansto motel carpark.

Motel to Marker P1 (300m)

From the motel, walk east past the communications tower to the electricity pylon on the valley's edge (behind B34). The white trunked trees are Scribbly Gums and the black trunked are Bloodwoods. There is a very large Silver Banksia (*Banksia marginata*) just before the pylon.

Marker P1-P2 (300m)

P1 is on the northern edge of the pylon. The track descends through shrubby vegetation to a seepage line. In summer it is a good idea to carry a switch in case of cob webs made by the large but harmless Orb weaver spiders. Watch out for the red bottlebrush flowers (*Callistemon citrinus*). The track then ascends into Open Schlerophyll (hard leaved) forest dominated by Sydney Red Gums (*Angophora costata*) with smooth orange-grey deciduous bark. In the valley below, the large sword-like leaves of Gynea Lilies (*Doryanthes excelsa*) form the under story. They are a spectacular sight in spring when their large red flowers open on top of a stalk that can be 8m high. The small, flat-stemmed *Bossiaea heterophylla* is commonly seen and has yellow pea flowers with a chocolate keel. The vegetation on top of the plateau is noticeably different as conditions here are much drier and more exposed.

Marker P2

This marks where the Orange and the Pink track split. The **Pink track** goes to the left and stays on top of the escarpment while the **Orange track** turns right and descends 130m into the valley.

P2-P3 (300M)

There is a seat just after P2. The bush here is usually open and the going easy. The flower spikes of Banksias are a major feature. Old Man Banksia (*Banksia serrata*) has large grey flower spikes in summer and long saw like leaves, the others flower in winter: Heath Banksia (*ericifolia*) has tall reddish spikes with tiny leaves, Hairpin Banksia (*spinulosa*) has tall honey spikes with narrow leaves and *marginata* has small lemon spikes with intermediate leaves.

Marker P3

This marker is at a 'T' intersection. Turn left to go to P9 and the short way back to the motel (total trip 2kms). Turn right to continue to P4.

P3-P4 (300m)

A descending track often used by mountain bike riders so keep a look out. As the track descends there is a change in the vegetation due to the presence of moisture seeping down the hill side. There are many Bloodwood trees (*Corymbia gummifera*) with a soft powdery bark often burnt black. Keep an eye out for the small, pink, 4 petalled flowers of the tufty trigger plants (*Stylidium productum*). These have an irritable trigger mechanism that deposits pollen on the back of visiting insects. Also watch for the large yellow pea flowers of (*Gompholobium grandiflorum*).

P4 (Beware of slippery rocks & stay away from the rock edge)

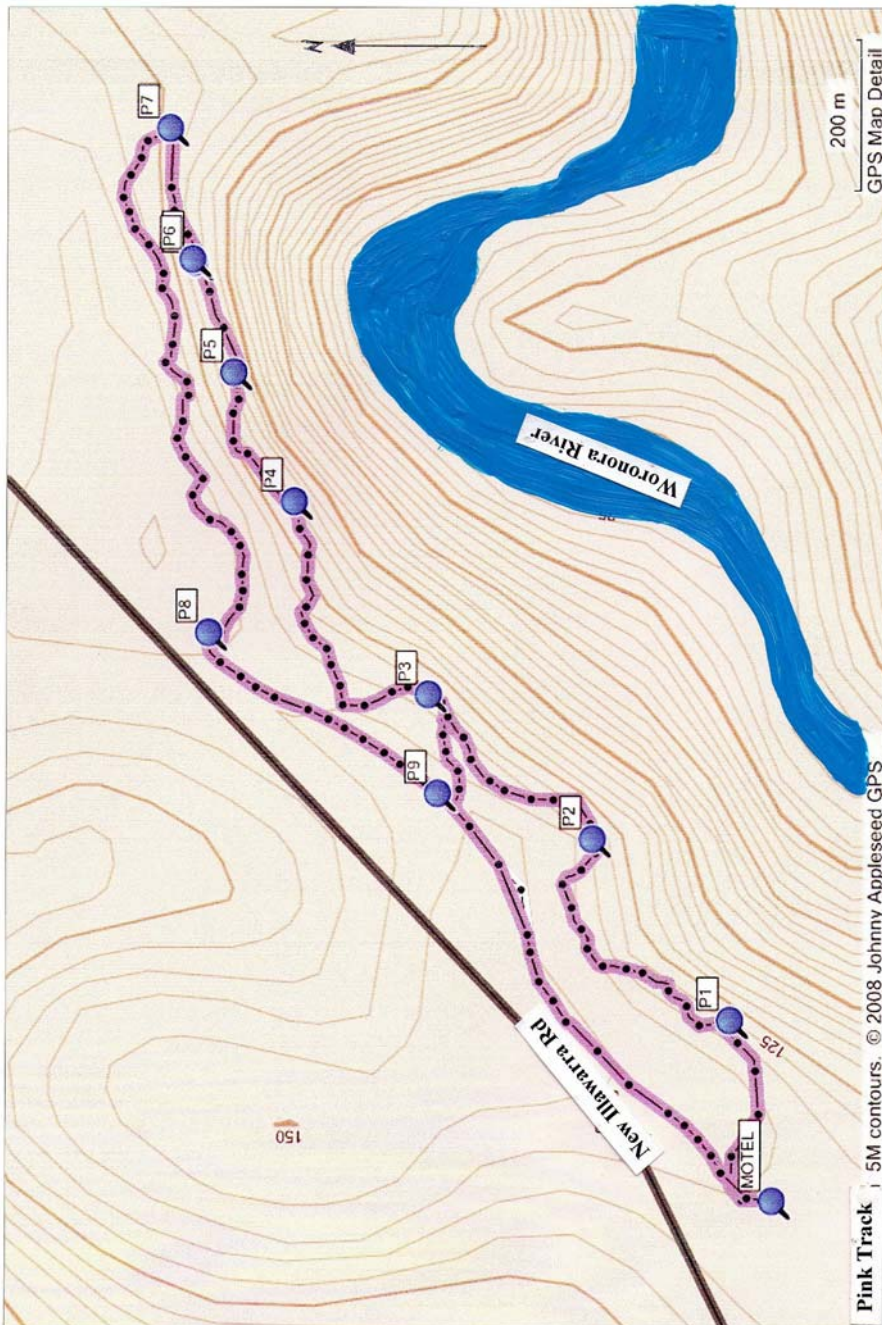
This is a look out position into the Woronora Valley. Far below the river can be seen descending through a series of large pools. In Spring keep an eye out for the scimitar shaped wings and high speed antics of a pair of Peregrine Falcons that regularly nest in the area. Flocks of Sulphur Crested cockatoos can be seen at any time.

P4-P5 (200m)

A short section to another look out. Near the valley edge moisture seeping along the bedrock beneath very shallow soil encourages an interesting collection of heath plants. The small, pink flowers of the sprawling River Dog Rose (*Bauera ruboides*) are a feature as are the white flowers of various Epacridaceae. In September between the track and the rocks to the left you may see the spectacular red flowers of the Waratah (*Telopea speciosissima*) – the NSW state emblem.

P5 (Beware of slippery rocks & stay away from the rock edge)

Another look out spot.



P5-P6 (150m)

Immediately after leaving P5 on the valleys edge is an example of a mallee – in this case the Whipstick Mallee (*Eucalyptus multicaulis*). A mallee is a multi-stemmed eucalypt with all the stems arising from a swelling at the base of the plant called a lignotuber. This is a catastrophe-resistant adaptation, as even if all the stems are lost due to an event, such as fire, the plant will recover. To the left is a more open area where a fire burnt in the recent past. As a consequence, until the under shrubs reestablish themselves this is a great area for ground orchids. The white flowers of *Caladenia catenata* open like a gloved hand. There are also the blue spotted flowers of Sun Orchids (*Thelymitra ixioides*), so called because they only open on sunny days.

P6

P6 is the site of sandstone quarries. The local sandstone was used as road aggregate for many years until better materials became available.

P6-P7 (180m)

A short distance past the quarry is P7. P7 is the farthest point on the track. The **Pink track** turns left (North/West) up the hill. A road to the right descends to the river at the causeway but it is very steep and returning is a challenge for the not-so-young.

P7-P8, (600m)

The **Pink track** turns left (North/West) and climbs above the quarry, it then turns left (West) as it reaches the plateau and skirts disturbed land near a water tank and communications tower.

P8

This marker near the edge of New Illawarra Road is where the track turns abruptly South/West.

P8 –P9 (800m, level)

The track is now on an old alignment of the road as is obvious from the bitumen. There are many hakeas along here distinguished by large woody follicles containing 2 seeds: *sericea* has spiky leaves and large 'nuts' and *dactyloides* has flat leaves and smaller 'nuts'.

P9-Motel. (800m level)

An easy stroll.

Other booklets available in this series.

For additional copies/comments email Facilities Management, Campus Services: fmleaders@ansto.gov.au or phone 9717 9200 during business hours.

We would also appreciate if you would notify us of any hazards or maintenance issues.

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