



**MENAI
WILDFLOWER
GROUP**



Nuclear-based science benefiting all Australians

ANSTO buffer zone track Bardens Creek - The Blue Walk

Before starting out:

Let the Australian Federal Police on the Ansto site know where & 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.

Length of walk and duration:

The main walk is 2.6kms (approx 2 hrs) but there are alternative routes that can make it shorter or longer. The trip from Marker 1 to the Aboriginal engravings and back is about 2kms. In between metal markers the way is dotted with blue spray paint apart from the (steep) short cut between markers 9 and 13 which is in yellow.

Starting point:

The starting point (Marker 1) is on the northern side of New Illawarra Rd opposite Rutherford Ave (ie opposite the main Ansto sign).

Stage from Markers 1 to 2. A gentle down hill walk of 130 metres.

The white trees are Scribbly Gums (*Euc haemastoma/racemosa*) the scribbles are a result of a moth larvae feeding between the bark layers. The trees with the powdery bark often burnt black are Bloodwoods (*Corymbia gummifera*). The common name comes from the colour of the resin often seen oozing from damaged areas.

Stage from Marker 2-3 50 m across plank bridges

Bardens Creek at Marker 2 is held up by a sandstone ledge. A swamp has formed to the left dominated by Sword Sedge (*Gahnia sieberiana*) and Sydney Golden Wattle (*Acacia longifolia*). There are Tree Ferns (*Cyathea australis*) and the under story is dominated by Coral Fern (*Gleichenia dicarpa*)

Stage from Marker 3-4 150 m steady descent.

Marker 3 denotes a split in the trail. Take the right hand descending track. Note the change in vegetation. Here we are quickly into Sydney Red Gum (*Angophora costata*) territory, the large knobby trees with smooth orange/grey bark (depending on the time of the year) are rock lovers. Other trees include the Sydney Peppermint (*Eucalyptus piperita*) that has persistent dark bark on all but the outermost limbs; the Grey Gum (*Eucalyptus punctata*) this favourite of the Koala has a thick corky grey bark that sheds to reveal orange patches. Other under story plants include the Gynea Lily (*Doryanthes excelsa*) and the Old Man Banksia (*Banksia serrata*) with saw like leaves and bubbly grey bark. Along the creek to the right a large stand of the local bottlebrush (*Callistemon citrinus*) stands out when in flower.

Marker 4-5 250m steady descent

Marker 4 is on a fine example of a large Scribbly Gum with 7 trunks. Scribbly Gums start with a single trunk but if it is destroyed (often by fire) several new trunks may arise from the base (lignotuber).

Marker 5

Here the track splits. Straight on is a spur track to some Aboriginal engravings at Marker 6. The main Blue track turns right and crosses a bridge to Marker 7.

Marker 5-6 300m involving a creek crossing and a climb to a rock platform. From Marker 6 you will need to return to Marker 5.

Marker 6

In a shallow often wet depression is an engraving of a kangaroo. There are engravings of figures at the further end of the rock platform but they are badly eroded and indistinct. Axe grinding grooves can be seen near the edge of the platform.

Marker 5-7 50m across a bridge then immediately turn left onto the rocky area beside the stream.

Great spot for water dragons, dragon flies and tadpoles. In Spring River Dog Rose (*Bauera ruboides*) and Pink Swamp Heath (*Springelia incarna*) are a feature. Several carnivorous Drosera species are in the area including the tiny pink rosettes of *Drosera spathulata*. Aboriginal axe grinding grooves can be seen.

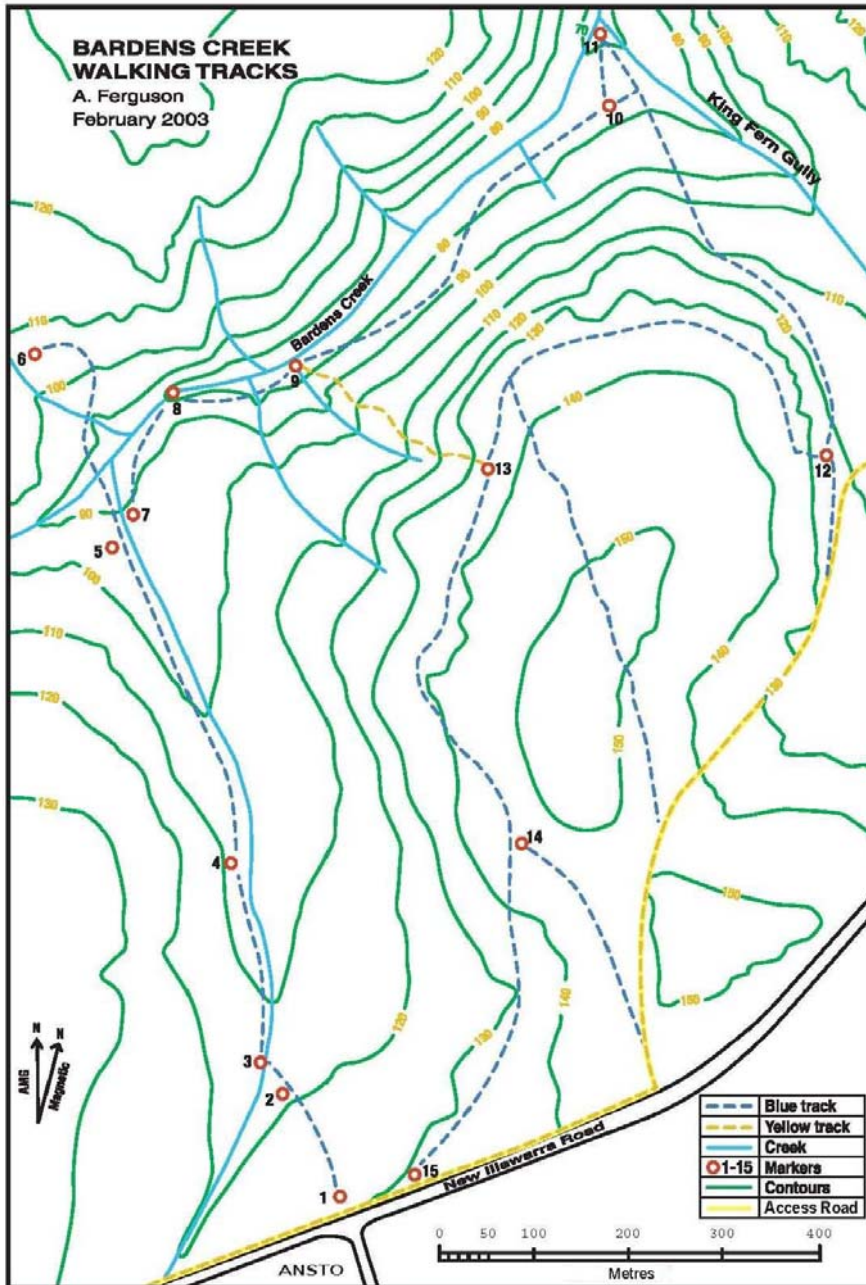
Marker 7-8 180 metres initially level then a steady descent.

The path initially crosses mallee-heath dominated by Beetle Bush (*Angophora hispida*) with rough grey-green leaves, and *Banksia oblongifolia* with dark green spoon shaped leaves, then descends through an under story that includes NSW Christmas Bush (*Ceratopetalum gummiferum*). Marker 8 is on the edge of a seasonal waterfall over looking a valley dominated by Sydney Reds and Gynea Lilies, this is a stunning sight when in flower. On the valley floor is a carpet of Umbrella Fern (*Sticherus flabellatus*).

Marker 8-9 150m riser across hillside before descending.

In spring watch out for the glorious pink flowers of *Eriostemon australasius* and the stunning Waratahs (*Telopea speciosissima*).

Marker 9 From here a track ascends to the right to marker 13 it is short but steep. This section is marked in yellow. The Blue track continues straight on.



Marker 9-13 *The Short way home (The Yellow Track). A steep 250m. At Marker 13 turn right.*
 In spring watch out for Wedding Bush (*Ricinocarpus pinifolius*) and Boronia (*Boronia ledifolia*)

Marker 9-11 *400m The long way home. (The Blue track).*

The valley opens out and the vegetation changes. There is a lot more Tea Tree and Sheoaks are a feature. Marker 11 is at a pool close to the junction with King Fern Gully. King Ferns are the dominant species down stream from the pool that contains small fish and yabbies.

Marker 11-12 *400m Rising steeply in places.*

The track climbs through open forest including some very large examples of Bloodwood. After the steep section the track follows the contours and approaches the stream that flows into King Fern Gully. There are several excellent examples of axe grinding grooves in the stream bed. At Marker 12 the track again splits. The left hand branch emerges onto an access road. Either route will get you home. If you use the access road turn right (south) on to it. The access road will bring you back to New Illawarra Rd which you can follow back to the start. The Blue track turns to the right at Marker 12 and ascends the hill.

Marker 12-13 *300m At first a sharp rise then levels out*

Watch out for *Bossiaea* sp yellow pea flowers with chocolate coloured keels. There are also some good examples of Grass Trees as the track follows the edge of the escarpment above the valley you have just walked along. Another track from the access road joins in from the left. Marker 13 which is on a post where the yellow track from Marker 9 rejoins.

Marker 13-14 *(250m undulating)*

At Marker 14 the track again splits. The left hand branch joins the access road, if you take this turn right (south) when you join the access road. The marked blue track descends to the right.

Marker 14-15 *(300m undulating)*

The track dips down to cross the mallee-heath and emerges at Marker 15, 60m from the start.

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.

April 2009