

## WARREN GORGE LOOP TRAIL

The Warren Gorge walking trail provides excellent examples of vegetation in the Flinders Ranges. You will pass through different micro-climates which are evident by the change in vegetation and geology. The trail takes you to a lookout locally known as Smoke-oh Lookout. In Australia, the term Smoke-oh is a commonly used colloquial name for a morning or afternoon tea break or other break in the working day, making it an ideal name for this lookout, which provides an excellent spot to stop and rest on the trail.

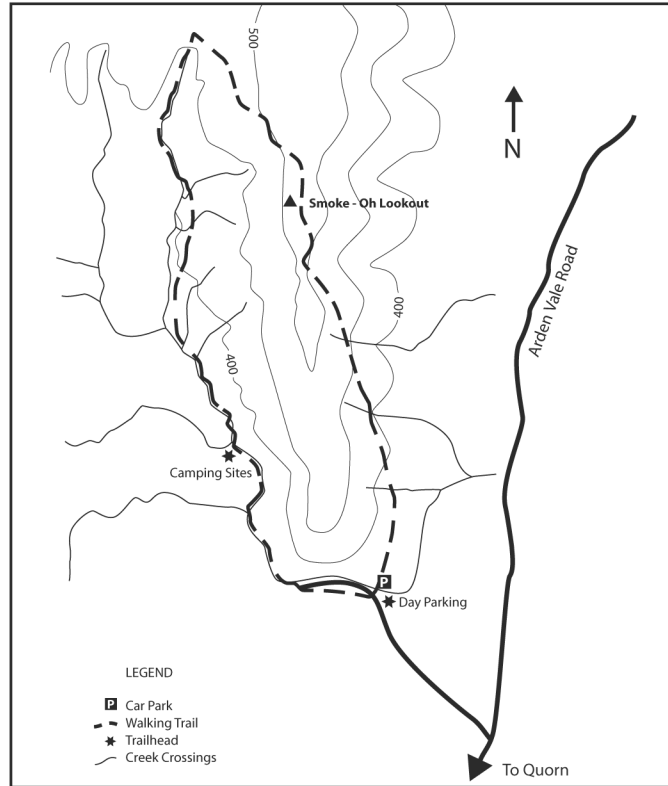


## SELF GUIDED WALK

The Warren Gorge Loop Trail is 5.2kms long and takes between 1.5 - 3 hours to complete. It is easy to moderate depending on your level of fitness. There are some loose surfaces and short steep parts.

## ACCESS

Approach Warren Gorge via the Arden Vale Road out of Quorn. Follow the signs on dirt roads into the Gorge. You will cross a cattle grid before approaching the day visitor's car park on the right. You can begin the walk at the trail head in this car park, or from the camp ground trailhead, approximately 1km further on.



### Sources:

Ray Wood's Field Notes

### Printed by:

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## PREPARE FOR YOUR WALK

- Wear comfortable shoes, hat and sunscreen and take drinking water.
- Wear cool clothes in summer and be prepared for bad weather in the cooler months.
- Do not damage the vegetation and stay on the marked trail
- Look after habitat – do not remove plants or dead wood, which are home to many creatures
- Keep the landscape beautiful, please do not litter – this includes cigarette butts
- No fires during fire ban season please

# Warren Gorge



**The  
Flinders  
Ranges  
Council**

Warren Gorge provides an excellent example of the many varying micro-climates that exist in pockets throughout the Flinders Ranges due to the slight changes in geology, environment and topography. While walking along the trail you may notice some spots that have quite different vegetation to the surrounding area - these pockets of temperate vegetation exist due to the different micro-climate they experience, as geology affects the local climate and soils, which then determines the type of vegetation that can grow. The sheltered gullies receive less sunlight and therefore have more moisture in the soil than that of exposed areas. It is so fine-tuned that different slope sides in the same gully may have varying vegetation. The southern slopes receive less sunlight giving them a temperate micro-climate, while the northern slopes receive more sunlight causing them to have a more arid micro-climate. In the gullies and gorges there are some small caves and hide-holes that the animals use for protection from extreme weather and predators. These spots also have little springs and puddles that are often a lifeline to the animals during the intense summer. You may be fortunate enough to see Yellow-Footed Rock Wallabies drinking from the pools of water, which whilst endangered and generally rare, are iconic to the Flinders Ranges.



*Yellow-Footed Rock Wallaby*

## PLANT COMMUNITIES AT WARREN GORGE

The plant communities found in the Flinders Ranges are generally influenced by soil type, level of exposure to sun and wind. The ability of plants to penetrate the strata to access deeper moisture reserves is another component. Some plant communities you pass through on this walk include:

### Acacia

These species are highly beneficial to the environment as they have nitrogen-fixing bacteria living on their roots. Acacias improve soil condition by taking nitrogen from the air and converting it so that plants can use it. This feature allows Acacia to grow in very poor soil where other plants cannot.

### Cypress Pine

These are usually found with grasses and herbs growing like a carpet under them. There are few young pine trees in areas with grazing pressure. They were a popular building resource for settlers as they are resistant to white ants. They grow in deep red-brown clay loams. This is one example of a Gondwanan plant species that still survives today. It is the only pine tree native to South Australia.

### Eucalypts

There are many Eucalypt species and each one has specific conditions that they prefer. Eucalypt trees that have multi-stemmed trunks are known as Mallees. The word Mallee comes from the Aboriginal word "mali" which means water, as some Mallee roots provide fresh drinkable water when cut. The River Red Gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*), has some interesting characteristics. Predominantly found in creek beds, the roots of the River Red Gum grow very deep to tap into under ground water storages. Seedlings of River Red Gums have very long roots that enable it to survive drought and flood from a young age. When stressed from lack of water, the River Red Gum will drop whole limbs without warning, making them unsafe to camp under. They also drop a percentage of their leaves during summer and periods of drought to reduce the amount of water needed to survive. The leaves are spear-head shaped and their hard waxy surface reduces water loss by transpiration. The tree even rotates its leaves during hot days so that there is minimal amount of surface area facing the sun.

### Grassland

This can consist of Hummock and Tussock grasses (e.g. Spear grass) that tend to grow on wide-open plains in the region. Both types of grasses are found on poor quality soils and stony hills. These communities are particularly useful as habitat for a diverse range of rare and common insects, reptiles and birds. As the name suggests, Porcupine Grass (commonly called Spinifex) is very prickly when touched. This type of grass is able to grow in poor quality soil and on stony hills where it forms dense communities. Spinifex grasses grow from the centre outward, and when the middle dies, it creates a ringlike structure. Kangaroos often lie in these rings for protection from the wind. Spinifex contains highly flammable compounds that burn intensely in a fire. Many natural fires in the Flinders Ranges are caused by Spinifex being set alight by lightning strikes.

### Yakka

Found on skeletal soils on ridge tops, the Yakka grows well in poor soils. They are very slow growing, respond well to fire and are endemic to Australia. Endemic floras are species of plants that can only be found in a particular region, state or country. The Yakka is a highly evolved member of the sclerophyll community - thriving on poor soils and being highly adaptable to fire, making it a hardy and unique plant.

The Yakka has many uses; the resin extract can be used as an adhesive, the fleshy heart shaped bulb inside the trunk can be eaten, and the external parts of the trunk can be burnt and inhaled to improve the sinuses.

