

# Welcome to Girraween and Sundown national parks

## Relax or go wild

Pack warm clothes (no matter what season) and take an easy country drive 260km south-west of Brisbane to Girraween or Sundown national parks on the Queensland–New South Wales border.

Be enticed by cool streams on sunny summer days and the songs of migrating woodland birds in autumn. Revel in icy winter mornings followed by clear blue skies and the promise of colourful wildflowers bursting into blossom in spring.

Getaways to Girraween mean great family fun with a hint of adventure—whether for a few hours or days. Sundown offers solitude and the challenge of scenic four-wheel drives, remote long distance hikes, or the chance to simply relax by the Severn River and throw in a line.

Whichever stunning national park you visit on the Granite Belt, be sure to allow time along your journey to savour the delights of Queensland’s premium food and wine region.

## Getting there

Girraween is an easy country drive along bitumen roads: turn east off the New England Highway halfway between Stanthorpe and Tenterfield. Stop at Girraween’s information centre to find out more about the park and what you can see and do when you visit.

Sundown has 3 entrances via unsealed roads. You can drive a car to The Broadwater at the park’s southern end (near Glenlyon Dam), but will need a high clearance 4WD to access Nundubbermere Falls in the north and Sundown’s eastern section via Ballandean.

“ Drive only a few hours south-west of Brisbane to the coolest parks in Queensland!

Ice forms on rockpools during frosty winter mornings when the walking is fabulous under clear blue skies. Spring means spectacular wildflowers; summer storms send water trickling off rocks into creeks and waterholes, while autumn brings the varied sounds of migratory woodland birds. Whatever the season there’s much to see and do.

Girraween is famous for its boulders, wildflowers and camping adventures for all the family. Sundown is rugged and best explored on foot or in a 4WD. Whether you come to stroll by the creek, climb a peak, or just relax and spot the wildlife, we know you will enjoy your visit.

*Ranger Greg on behalf of the Girraween and Sundown Rangers*

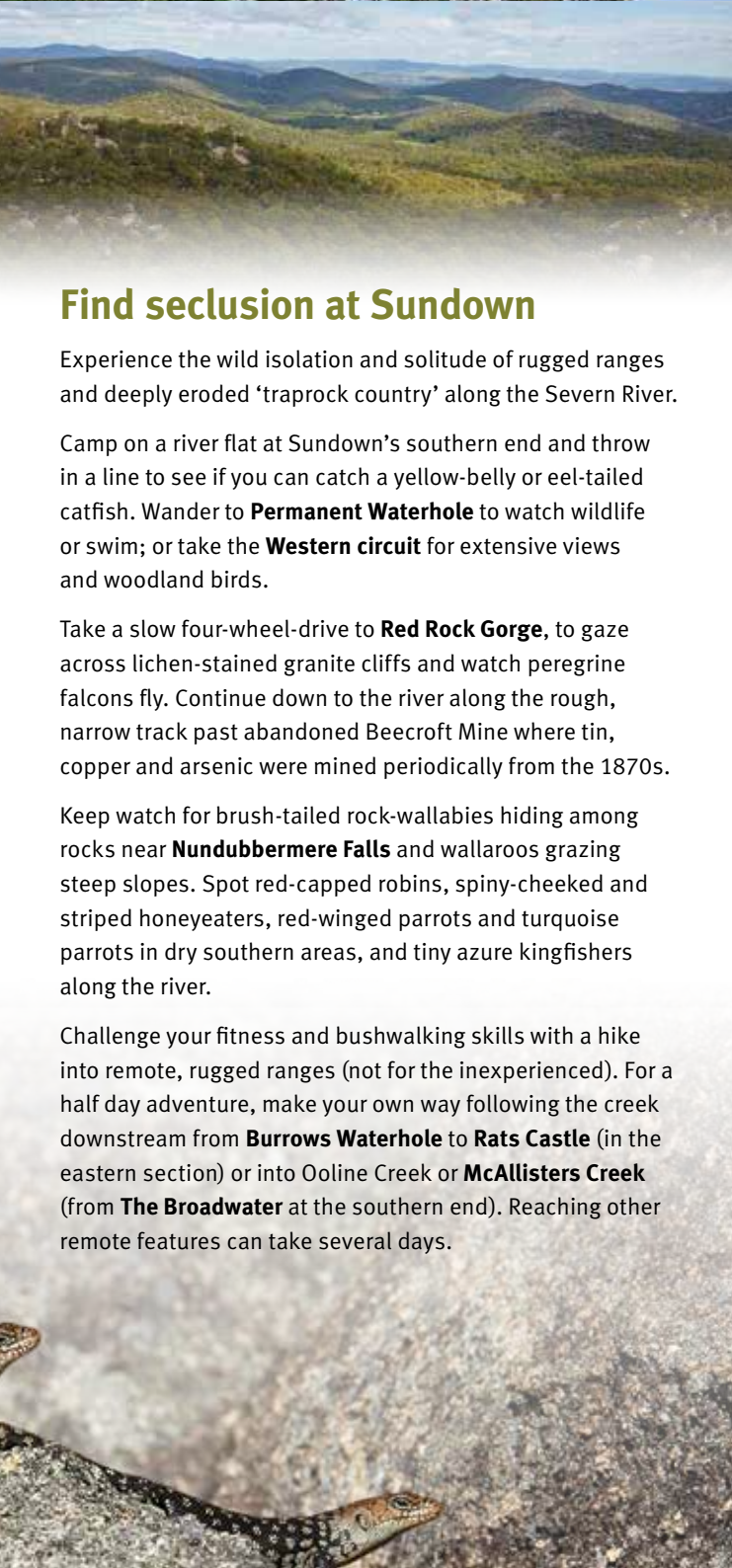


## Explore Girraween’s granite wonderland

Longing for a nature escape? Wander past imposing granite outcrops, around amazing rock sculptures, or relax by a rockpool. Climb to a peak and feel like you’re on top of the world! Delight at a myriad of feathered, furred or scaly creatures, and delicate wildflowers splashing colour among the granite in spring. Girraween is an Aboriginal word meaning ‘Place of Flowers’ and its changing seasons will lure you back time and time again.

From easy **Wyberba walk** to a challenging full day hike to **Mount Norman** and back, it takes more than a couple of days to explore Girraween’s 11,800 hectares of rock-strewn ridges, cascading creeks and fascinating forests.

Thrill at seeing **The Pyramid** or hiking up it for the first time. Stand in awe under **Granite Arch**. Delight in discovery along the creek or between boulders on the **Bald Rock Creek circuit** or **The Junction track**, where enticing rockpools beckon you to dip in your toes or watch reflections in still, chilly waters. Simply disappear! **Underground Creek** will amaze as water mysteriously vanishes and then resurfaces to continue its journey downstream to **Dr Roberts Waterhole**. Get your blood pumping on a longer hike to imposing **Castle Rock**, **The Sphinx** or **Turtle Rock**, where you’ll gaze over rugged scenery formed by molten rock that has been uplifted, exposed and eroded by water, wind and ice. Be transported into Girraween’s remote ‘back country’ when you visit **Mount Norman day-use area**, cycle or walk **shared trails**, or take on the challenge of an overnight hike.



## Find seclusion at Sundown

Experience the wild isolation and solitude of rugged ranges and deeply eroded ‘traprock country’ along the Severn River.

Camp on a river flat at Sundown’s southern end and throw in a line to see if you can catch a yellow-belly or eel-tailed catfish. Wander to **Permanent Waterhole** to watch wildlife or swim; or take the **Western circuit** for extensive views and woodland birds.

Take a slow four-wheel-drive to **Red Rock Gorge**, to gaze across lichen-stained granite cliffs and watch peregrine falcons fly. Continue down to the river along the rough, narrow track past abandoned Beecroft Mine where tin, copper and arsenic were mined periodically from the 1870s.

Keep watch for brush-tailed rock-wallabies hiding among rocks near **Nundubermere Falls** and wallaroos grazing steep slopes. Spot red-capped robins, spiny-cheeked and striped honeyeaters, red-winged parrots and turquoise parrots in dry southern areas, and tiny azure kingfishers along the river.

Challenge your fitness and bushwalking skills with a hike into remote, rugged ranges (not for the inexperienced). For a half day adventure, make your own way following the creek downstream from **Burrows Waterhole** to **Rats Castle** (in the eastern section) or into Ooline Creek or **McAllisters Creek** (from **The Broadwater** at the southern end). Reaching other remote features can take several days.



## Get lost in nature

Release your inner nature lover! This snap-frozen landscape more akin to southern States has plants and animals that don’t occur elsewhere in Queensland.

Sunlit outcrops are the preferred habitat of reptiles that dart under rocks and into crevices. Come face-to-face with a Cunningham’s skink or spot an eastern water dragon by the creek. Thrill at discovering frogs where it’s moist and snakes among leaf litter.

Wake early and greet the birds. Wrens, robins, thornbills and firetails flit through the understorey, while honeyeaters, warblers, parrots, treecreepers and flycatchers forage to the tops of eucalypt trees. Be mystified by the master of mimicry. The elusive superb lyrebird—more often heard than seen—is one of the 170 bird species at Girraween and 150 at Sundown.

By day, admire red-necked wallabies and eastern grey kangaroos grazing lazily in open grassy areas. At night, catch sight of busy nocturnal residents. Common brushtail possums are bold thieves stealing food from unwary campers. Glimpse tiny sugar and feathertail gliders in trees or bush rats, antechinus and echidnas rummaging across the ground for food.



📷 Clockwise from below: Eastern grey kangaroos; superb lyrebird putting on a show; yellowtufted honeyeater; duck orchid.

Photo (top): © Qld Govt  
Photos (clockwise from below):  
Maxime Coquard © Qld Govt;  
Jolene McLellan © Qld Govt;  
© Ted Colles; © Bill Goebel



📷 Cunningham’s skinks (left)  
Photo: Maxime Coquard  
© Tourism and Events Qld



## Further information

-  [qld.gov.au/NationalParks](http://qld.gov.au/NationalParks)
-  [qld.gov.au/Camping](http://qld.gov.au/Camping)
-  [qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts](http://qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts)  
(access, closures and conditions)
-  [qldnationalparks](https://www.facebook.com/qldnationalparks)
-  [@QldParks](https://www.instagram.com/QldParks); [#QldParks](https://www.instagram.com/QldParks)



This brochure is also available online at [qld.gov.au/ParkBrochures](http://qld.gov.au/ParkBrochures)

For help planning your holiday, visit [queensland.com](http://queensland.com) or [southernqueenslandcountry.com.au](http://southernqueenslandcountry.com.au)



## Camp overnight

Create camping memories of a lifetime—share the day’s adventures over a barbecue, spot possums and wake with the birds at Girraween’s popular camping areas. Or enjoy ‘roughing it’ in the unspoilt seclusion of Sundown’s wild and rugged terrain with few, or no facilities. Book your camp sites well in advance at [qld.gov.au/Camping](http://qld.gov.au/Camping) especially during the school holidays. Check where fires are permitted before booking, and remember to bring your own clean-milled firewood or fuel stove. If you need a powered site, or camping isn’t your thing, visit [southernqueenslandcountry.com.au](http://southernqueenslandcountry.com.au) for other places to stay.

## Beat around the bush

Savour a bush picnic then hit the trails. Use the electric barbecues to cook up a storm at popular Bald Rock Creek day-use area in the heart of Girraween, or eat a packed lunch under towering trees at smaller, secluded picnic spots.

Don your hiking boots and get closer to nature on short or long walks. Feel the freedom pedalling through the forest

## Camping at a glance

### At Girraween

#### Castle Rock camping area

Large open, semi-shaded area with views of granite outcrops. Person with disability (PWD) sites are available with PWD amenities close by. Other amenities have toilets and shower cubicles (BYO portable shower).



#### Kambuwal camping area

Choose from intimate sites tucked away in the bush and granite outcrops. Amenities block has PWD access. BYO portable shower.



#### Terrawambella camping area

Large, open grassed area with views of The Pyramid and Castle Rock. The tent area is only available for large organised groups, whereas the trailer sites are suitable for larger caravans and motorhomes. Amenities block has PWD access. BYO portable shower.



### At Sundown

#### The Broadwater camping area

Individual sites on the river bank and large open area for groups of 15–30 people. Caravans less than 4m long and small motorhomes only\*. Use donkey heater to boil hot water for showers. Pit toilets.



along the Creek or Peak shared trails in Girraween’s back country, but remember cyclists must give way to walkers.

Adventurous mountain bikers experienced in remote terrain can also cycle the rough 4WD access road in Sundown—keep watch for vehicles.


## The essential packlist

- Suitable footwear, clothing and equipment for the activity you are planning.
- Warm clothing. It can turn cold at any time of year.
- Drinking water or sterilisation tablets. Treat water from all sources (including taps) before drinking.
- First-aid kit, including sun and insect protection.
- Sturdy rubbish bags—no bins are provided, please take your rubbish with you when you leave the park.
- A fuel stove or untreated, clean-milled firewood (such as untreated mill off-cuts) for wood barbecues. You cannot collect firewood from the park.
- Solar shower bag, tent to hang it in and water to help you stay refreshed (cubicles provided in Castle Rock camping area only).



# Girraween and Sundown national parks



 (far left) Kambuwal camping area; (left, above, right) Girraween's walks are perfect for the whole family. Kids love climbing rocks and exploring along the creek.

*Photos: (far left) Jolene Nelson © Qld Govt; (left and above) Maxime Coquard © Qld Govt; (right) Brett Roberts © Qld Govt*

## Head off the beaten track

Take a quiet back road to Girraween's secluded Mount Norman day-use area. Or bounce down Sundown's steep, narrow 20km 4WD track to relax by the Severn River.

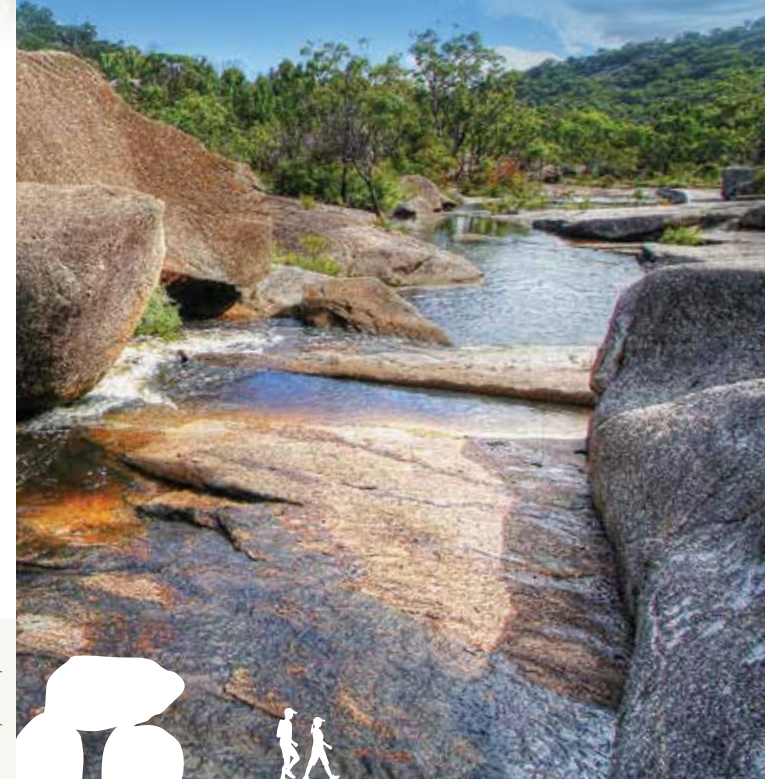
A high clearance 4WD and off-road experience are needed. Drive carefully and take spares in case of flat tyres or breakdowns.

- Camper trailers are not recommended on Sundown's 4WD road as it's very rough and has steep, single-lane sections.
- The going in Sundown is very slow so allow plenty of time.
- Sundown's creeks rise rapidly after rain—roads can flood or become boggy. Check the weather before you go.
- Wash your vehicle thoroughly before and after your visit and help stop the spread of weeds.

## Bushwalk overnight

Challenge yourself on a strenuous off-track overnight hike carrying all your gear on your back. Raise a sweat and breathe in the isolation of difficult-to-get-to destinations in rough, rocky country with mind-blowing scenery.

To hike off-track you **MUST** be fit, experienced and suitably prepared! Ensure you have the relevant topographic maps, guide books, a compass or GPS, a personal locating beacon (PLB), and all necessary equipment, food, water and a hiking companion. Be careful and don't take risks. Limited remote, walk-in camp sites without facilities are available for experienced bushwalkers. For further details and bookings visit [qld.gov.au/NationalParks](http://qld.gov.au/NationalParks)



### Red Rock camping area

Small open camping area amid fragrant eucalypt forest. Access by 4WD or on foot. Pit toilets.



### Burrows Waterhole camping area

Attractive riverside area with shady spots at end of the 4WD road. Pit toilets.



### Reedy Waterhole bushcamp

Large open grassy area near the Severn River. Access by 4WD or on foot. No facilities.



### Nundubbermere Falls bushcamp

Small, semi-shaded area for tents only. Caution: steep drop to river below. No formed walking track. No facilities.
































### Both parks


#### Remote walkers' camps

Sundown's walkers' camps (max 8 people each) are not defined and fuel stoves are recommended. Girraween has 7 walkers' camps ranging in size to accommodate 4–8 people. Open fires are prohibited. Visit [qld.gov.au/NationalParks](http://qld.gov.au/NationalParks) for GPS references and other details. No facilities.





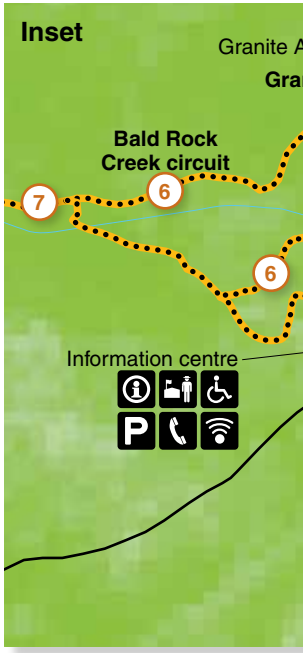
# Legend

-  National park
-  Highway
-  Sealed road
-  Unsealed road
-  4WD road
-  Waterways
-  State border
-  Information
-  Parking
-  Toilets
-  Wheelchair access
-  Picnic table
-  Wi-Fi
-  4WD access
-  Tent camping
-  Car camping
-  4WD camping
-  Caravan
-  Camper trailer
-  Motorhome
-  Barbecue—wood
-  Barbecue—electric
-  Shower cubicle (BYO water)
-  Structured platform lookout with handrails
-  Lookout with no built structure or handrails
-  Ranger base
-  Telephone
-  Mines
-  Water—  
not suitable for drinking

 There is no road through Sundown between Burrows Waterhole and The Broadwater.



-  Start of Western circuit and Permanent Waterhole
-  Start of Red Rock Gorge lookout track



QUEENSLAND

NEW SOUTH WALES

Permanent Waterhole

1

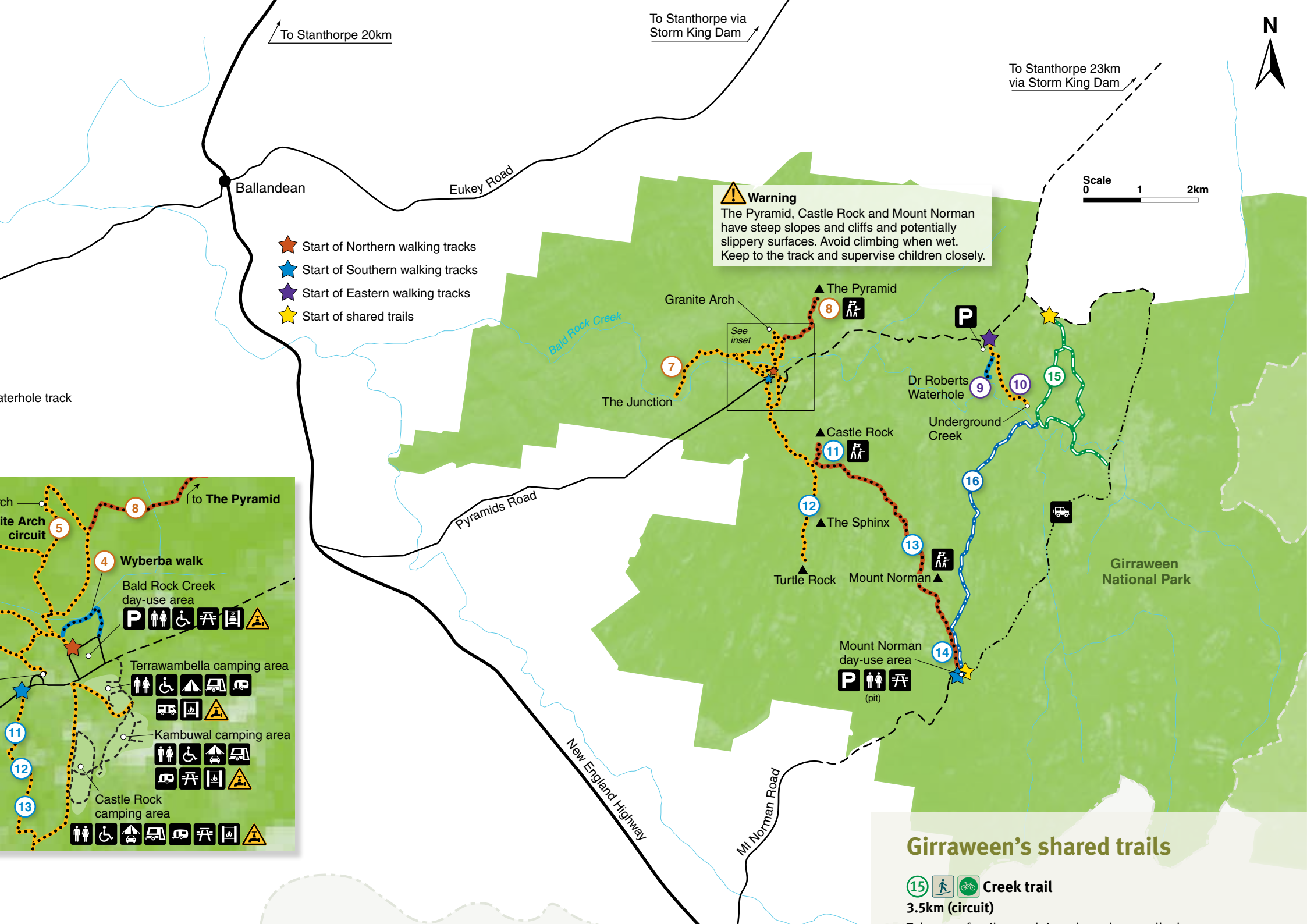
2

3

7

6

6



### Girraween's shared trails

15 Creek trail  
 3.5km (circuit)



## Track and trail classification

Grading	Suits	Track description
Grade 2 	Families with young children.	Easy level tracks, suitable for all fitness levels—no bushwalking experience needed. May be gentle hill sections or occasional steps.
Grade 3 	Most ages and fitness levels.	Well-defined tracks may have short steep hill sections, a rough surface and steps. Caution needed on decomposed granite and at exposed natural lookouts. Ankle-supporting footwear required.
Grade 4 	Bushwalkers with moderate levels of experience and fitness.	Tracks may be rough with steep, exposed rock inclines and many steps. Caution needed on decomposed granite and at exposed natural lookouts. Ankle-supporting footwear required.
Easy 	Beginner riders with basic mountain-bike skills and off-road bikes.	Wide trail with gentle gradient and smooth surface. Some obstacles such as roots, logs and rocks.
Intermediate 	Skilled mountain-bikers with basic off-road riding skills.	Trail with moderate gradients, variable surface and obstacles. May have steep sections.

“Relaxing by Bald Rock Creek is a perfect way to end a good walk. Dangle your feet in a cool rockpool or watch the swirling eddies of a tumbling cascade. You might even be lucky enough to spot a short-necked Bell’s turtle.  
*Ranger Jo*”



Photos (clockwise from top):  
Maxime Coquard © Qld Govt;  
Jolene McLellan © Qld Govt;  
© Robert Ashdown

“If the climb doesn’t take your breath away, the view from on top of The Pyramid will. You can see across most of Girraween and over to Sundown from there, and everyone loves taking photos beside Balancing Rock.  
*Ranger Karl*”



“Fishing in the Severn River at Sundown is one of the simple pleasures of life. The Broadwater is the best spot, but remember you must not bring live bait into the park. If you don’t like to fish you can simply relax and watch the birds.  
*Ranger Ian*”

## Walks at a glance

Sundown	Grade
① Western circuit	
② Permanent Waterhole	
③ Red Rock Gorge lookout	
Girraween	Grade
<b>Northern walking tracks</b>	
④ Wyberba walk	
⑤ Granite Arch	
⑥ Bald Rock Creek circuit	
⑦ The Junction	
⑧ The Pyramid	
Northern tracks combined	
<b>Eastern walking tracks</b>	
⑨ Dr Roberts Waterhole	
⑩ Underground Creek	
<b>Southern walking tracks</b>	
⑪ Castle Rock	
⑫ The Sphinx and Turtle Rock	
⑬ Mount Norman	
⑭ Mount Norman from Mount Norman day-use area	
Southern tracks combined	



### Return distance and walking time

4.5km 1.5hr	Ramble above river flats for extensive views and spot woodland birds including golden whistlers and spiny-cheeked, yellow-faced or fuscous honeyeaters. Keep watch for turquoise parrots near the camping area.
2km 1hr	Delve into secret depths. Even in the driest of times Permanent Waterhole is perfect for a swim. Be mesmerised by tiny azure kingfishers near the mouth of Ooline Creek and wildlife coming to drink at dawn or dusk.
500m 15min	Venture down a short track for stunning views across Sundown's rugged wilderness. In winter, mimicking lyrebirds call from moisture-loving vine scrubs in the gorge below.

### Return distance and walking time

280m (one way) 15min	Stroll along the creek glimpsing wrens and bowerbirds, admiring wildflowers and delighting in vistas of The Pyramid. Catch reflections in peaceful waters and take a quick peek at a Bell's turtle.
1.6km 30min	A favourite for families and the young at heart—cross Bald Rock Creek and wind through the forest to gaze in wonder at Girraween's natural stone archway. Perfect if time is short.
2.2km 1hr	Pause to fill your soul with the sounds and smells of the cascading creek. Catch sight of feathered, furred or scaly residents. Discover butterflies on bottlebrush and mesmerising patterns in water-sculpted rocks.
5.2km 2hr	Energise your body and mind following Bald Rock Creek downstream to its junction with Ramsay Creek. A must for wildflower lovers in spring! In dry seasons these creeks may not flow.
3.6km 2hr	Take an unforgettable and at times breathless journey for awesome views of Balancing Rock, Second Pyramid and across the park. You'll need a good level of fitness to climb the exposed rock face. Take time to rest and soak up the views.
8.3km 4hr	Experience the variety of Girraween when you climb The Pyramid, wind beneath Granite Arch and along Bald Rock Creek to The Junction and back.
1.2km 30min	Contemplate nature reflected in still deep waters after an easy walk past sometimes-swampy country sprouting ground orchids, conesticks, geebung, and banksias.
2.8km 1.5hr	Be mesmerised by burnished-gold, water-sculpted rocks and Bald Rock Creek disappearing mysteriously underground. Delight in the varied birdlife and colourful wildflowers on the way.
5.2km 1.5–2hr	Rise above the tree-line for spectacular 360 degree views. Shade, good birdwatching and moderate grades make for great walking, but it's a steep climb over exposed granite rocks to the summit.
7.4km 3–4hr	See for yourself a large granite monolith resembling a turtle's back and The Sphinx—a granite pinnacle bearing a large balancing tor. You'll enjoy this easy walk branching off the Castle Rock track.
11km 4–5hr	Leave Castle Rock behind and trek to the rocky slabs below the imposing Mount Norman monolith. The final approach to the summit is steep and rock climbing experience is needed to reach the absolute top. Never rock climb alone.
4km 1.5–2hr	Wander through rock gardens and stands of graceful Wallangarra white gums on Mount Norman's southern face. Reaching the summit requires rock climbing experience. Never rock climb alone.
15.4km 6–7hr	Make a great day out by visiting Castle Rock, The Sphinx, Turtle Rock and Mount Norman all on one amazing hike.

Take your family on a leisurely cycle or walk along a reasonably flat and forested trail discovering spring-time wildflowers and views of Bald Rock Creek.

### **Peak trail** 10.6km (return)

Be stunned by spectacular vistas of Mount Norman from a more difficult trail where cyclists employ their off-road skills.

Combine the 2 shared trails for an outstanding 17km (return) journey in nature.

## Adventure safely

### Make your visit memorable for all of the right reasons.

- Choose walks that match the capabilities of your entire group and the time you have available.
- Supervise children. Take extra care in rainy or windy conditions.
- Watch your step. Granite rocks become very slippery when wet. Decomposed granite on tracks can also be slippery.
- Stay well back from edges of rock faces or cliffs.
- Be careful near water. Never dive or jump into rivers, creeks or pools as water may be shallow or hide submerged debris, rocks or objects.
- Take plenty of drinking water. Boil or treat water from all sources before drinking. Never drink water from creeks in the vicinity of Sundown's old mines.
- Keep water supplies clean. Never wash near watercourses. Bury human waste and toilet paper well, 15cm deep and at least 100m away from waterways.
- Check conditions and stay informed. Check [qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts](http://qld.gov.au/ParkAlerts) and obtain weather forecasts and water and river height information from [bom.gov.au](http://bom.gov.au) before heading out as conditions can change rapidly (especially in Sundown).
- Let somebody know where you are going, when you plan to return and what to do if you are late.

### In an emergency

Call Triple Zero (000).

Mobile coverage is limited and unreliable.