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Purnululu National Park

World Heritage Area



Visitor guide



Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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Above Piccaninny Gorge

Welcome

Local Aboriginal people maintain a strong connection to this ancient landscape; a continual connection and association expressed through story, song, art and visits. People continue to use resources that have sustained their lives for thousands of years and work closely with government to ensure cultural obligations towards looking after the landscape are continued. We welcome you to this place and hope you enjoy a safe stay.

Purnululu National Park is 304km from Kununurra and 160km from Halls Creek by road. It covers an area of 239,723 hectares and has an adjacent conservation reserve of 79,602 hectares. The Bungle Bungle Range, which includes an extraordinary array of banded sandstone domes, covers 45,000 hectares of the park. These dramatically sculptured natural formations are unrivalled in their scale, grandeur and diversity of form anywhere in the world.

Land of the Dreaming

Aboriginal people have lived in this part of Australia for more than 20,000 years. Their traditional lifestyle changed soon after Alexander Forrest led the first colonial exploration to the Kimberley region in 1879, in search of natural resources and areas for grazing stock. In 1885 gold was found at Old Halls Creek, sparking the first gold rush in Western Australia.

Pastoralists arrived, bringing sheep and cattle, and setting the foundation for a pastoral industry that continues in the region today.

World Heritage

In 2003 the national park was World Heritage-listed for two main features – the area's incredible natural beauty and its outstanding geological value.

The Bungle Bungle Range is renowned for its striking banded domes; the world's most exceptional example of cone karst formations. They are made of sandstone deposited about 360 million years ago. Erosion by creeks, rivers and weathering in the past 20 million years has carved out these domes, along with spectacular chasms and gorges, creating a surreal landscape.

The domes' striking orange and grey bands are caused by the presence or absence of cyanobacteria. Dark bands indicate the presence of the cyanobacteria, which grows on layers of sandstone where moisture accumulates. The orange bands are oxidised iron compounds that have dried out too quickly for the cyanobacteria to grow.

Wildlife

More than 600 plant species have been recorded in Purnululu National Park, some of which are unique to the park. Typical tree species include bloodwoods and snappy gums. There are 13 species of spinifex – more than anywhere else in Australia. Sheltered gorges in the park protect the most southerly patches of rainforest found in the East Kimberley region.

More than 149 bird, 85 reptile, 32 native mammal and 12 frog species live in the park. Birds such as honeyeaters, doves, wood swallows and finches are in abundance. More elusive species include the white-quilled rock pigeon and the Australian bustard. There is at least one endemic lizard species, *Lerista bunglebungle*, a very rare small skink.

Below Double-barred finch



Visitor information

Please note: Four-wheel drive access only after turning off the highway

Access

The 53km track from the Great Northern Highway to the visitor centre is only accessible by four-wheel-drive high-clearance vehicles and single-axle off-road heavy-duty trailers. We recommend that vehicles have enough fuel for 200km of driving when turning off the highway.

Park visitor centre

The park visitor centre is open from 8am to 12 noon and 1pm to 4pm daily from early April until mid-October.

Fees

Vehicle entry and camping fees apply. Purnululu National Park has an online campground booking system. It is essential for visitors to book online to secure a campsite. Visitors must also pay an entry fee at the park visitor centre on arrival (unless you already have a national park pass). Visitors can also pay entry fees online when booking a campsite (unless you already have a national park pass). For day users, only entry fees apply at the self-registration station at the park visitor centre. For more details visit exploreparks.dbca.wa.gov.au.

Camping

There are two campgrounds in Purnululu National Park: Kurrajong and Walardi. The campgrounds are open from April to December each year. Both campgrounds offer toilets and bore water, and can accommodate vehicle-based camping for tents and off-road single-axle towable units such as camper trailers.

Respect other campers, keep noise to a minimum between the hours of 9pm and 7am (no radios, stereos and generators please).

Fires

Campfires are not permitted in the park. Please bring your own portable gas and cooking equipment.

Water

Untreated bore water is available from taps in the campgrounds. We advise that it be boiled before drinking. There are no showers in the campgrounds. Please use water sparingly.

Travelling times by vehicle and distances from Purnululu National Park Visitor Centre

| | Distance | Time |
|--|----------|--------|
| Airstrip and helipad | 18km | 30min |
| Bellburn* | 15km | 25min |
| Echidna | 20km | 35min |
| Kurrajong Campground | 7km | 15min |
| The Bloodwoods | 15km | 25min |
| Piccaninny (Cathedral Gorge and Domes) | 27km | 45min |
| Park visitor centre to highway | 53km | 2-3hrs |
| Walardi Campground | 12km | 20min |
| Kungkalanayi Lookout | 3km | 10min |
| Stonehenge | 13km | 20min |

* Bellburn is a commercial campground that must be booked in advance. Contact the Kununurra Visitor Centre on (08) 9168 1177.

Visitor safety

Plan ahead and prepare

- The park is closed for the wet season. Check with the Parks and Wildlife Service Kununurra office on (08) 9168 4200 for current road conditions and park opening dates (usually 1 April to 30 November, weather permitting).
- Be prepared for very hot weather. Take appropriate clothing, first aid supplies, vehicle equipment, extra fuel, food and water. These cannot be obtained in the park.

Travel and camp on durable surfaces

- Please drive slowly in accordance with road conditions. Stay on roads, tracks and trails. Camp only in designated areas.

Dispose of waste properly

- Extinguish cigarette butts – take them with you to dispose of appropriately.
- Take your rubbish with you when you leave.

Respect wildlife

- Refrain from feeding native animals and picking wildflowers.



Be considerate of your hosts and other visitors

- Do not walk on the domes – they are fragile.
- Do not bring your pet into the park.
- Stay on the marked trails (please remember, all Aboriginal sites are protected by law).

Your safety in natural areas is our concern, but your responsibility

Emergencies

Go to the park visitor centre. If unattended, go to the ranger's house adjacent to the centre.

Warmun Police Station (08) 9167 8437

Halls Creek Police Station (08) 9168 9777

Emergency contact to the park visitor centre is Channel 1 UHF duplex in the north and Channel 4 UHF duplex in the south.

More information

Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

State Operations Headquarters

17 Dick Perry Avenue

Kensington, Perth WA 6983

Ph (08) 9219 8000

Parks and Wildlife Service Kununurra office

Lot 248 Ivanhoe Road

Kununurra WA 6743

Ph (08) 9168 4200

dbca.wa.gov.au

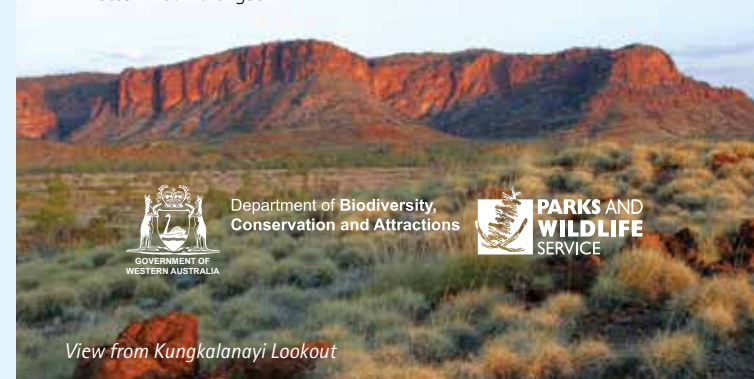
Parks and Wildlife Service Purnululu National Park

Visitor Centre

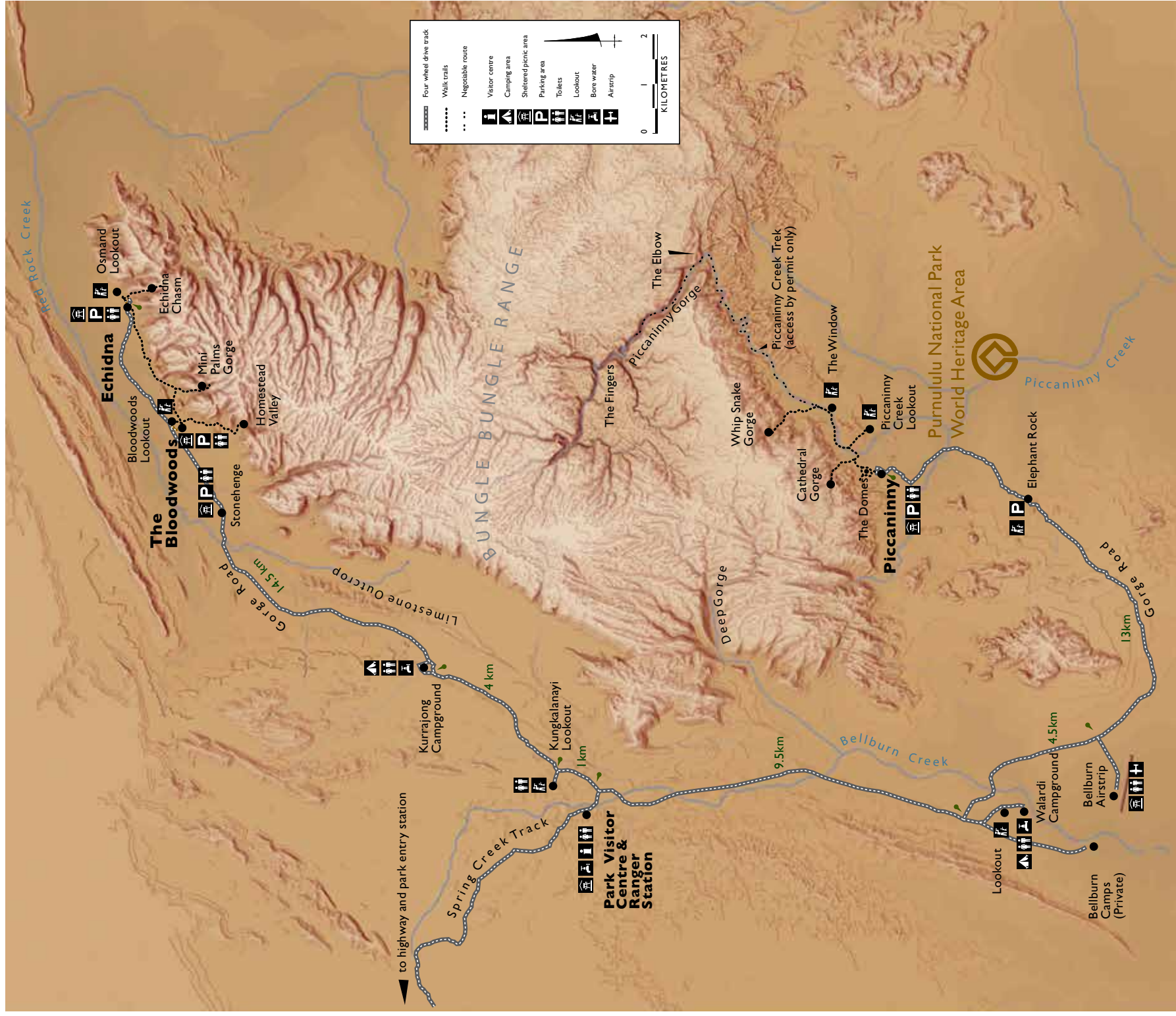
Ph (08) 9168 7300

Front cover Aerial view of the domes. Left *Livistona victoriae*.

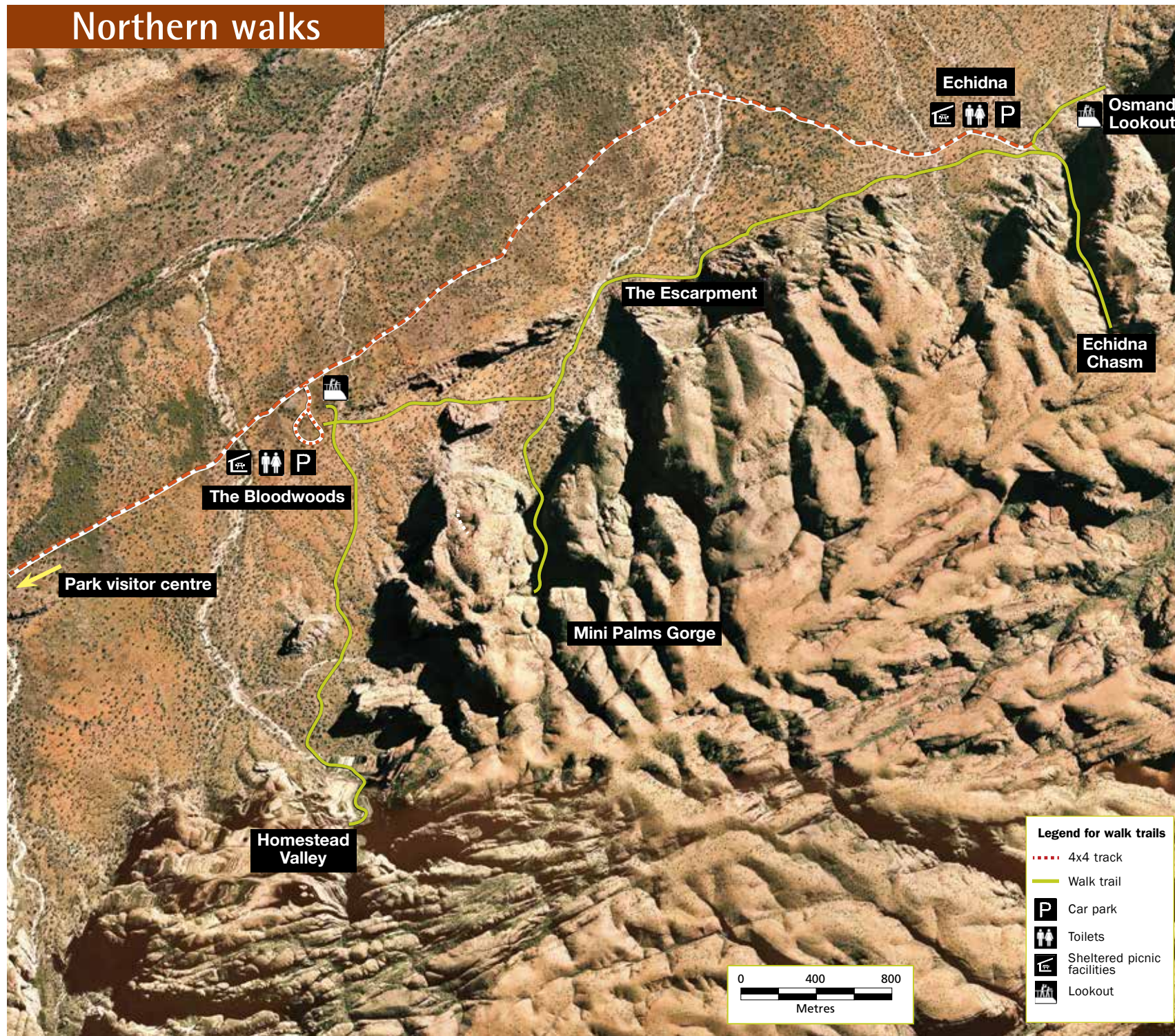
Photos – Rod Hartvigsen



View from Kungkalanayi Lookout



Northern walks



Walking in the park

Walk trails are the best way to explore the features of the Bungle Bungle Range. There are a variety of options from short strolls to an overnight trek. Trails are generally unmodified and rocky. Wear sturdy footwear. Temperatures can get very hot at times, reaching more than 40 degrees Celsius. Carry plenty of water (up to four litres per person per day) and dress for the heat with a hat and long sleeves. Walk in the early morning or late afternoon.

Northern walks

Echidna Chasm Class 4

This is a moderate 2km return walk from the Echidna car park with a challenging short climb near the end. Allow 45 minutes to an hour. Experience a spectacular 200m chasm with varying hues.

Stonehenge Class 2

This 520m return walk over an undulating surface introduces the traditional Aboriginal use of trees, shrubs and grasses. (Refer to park map for location.)

The Escarpment Class 3

The Escarpment Trail links Echidna to The Bloodwoods. It is a 2.6km walk to the turn-off to Mini Palms and a further 1km to the turn-off to the Homestead Valley.

Mini Palms Class 5

This is a moderately challenging 4.4km return walk from The Bloodwoods with some steep slopes, including negotiating large fallen rocks (or 7.4km return walk from Echidna). Allow two to three hours. It features soaring cliffs, livistona palms, two viewing platforms and a natural amphitheatre.

Homestead Valley Class 4

This two-hour, 4.4km return trail from The Bloodwoods cuts deep into the range into Homestead Valley (or 11.6km return trail from Echidna).

Kungkalanayi Lookout Class 3

The lookout has panoramic 360-degree views of spinifex-covered ridges and the western escarpment of the Bungle Bungle Range. Colour variations are exceptional at sunset and sunrise.

Osmand Lookout Class 3

A short walk from Echidna with a moderate slope to the lookout takes you to an elevated ridge with panoramic views of neighbouring Osmand Range. Allow 10 minutes.

The Bloodwoods Lookout Class 3

A short 500m return walk to view The Escarpment and woodland.

Southern walks

Walk trail classification



Class 1 Well-defined walk trail with a firm, even surface and no steep sections or steps. Suitable for all levels of experience and fitness.



Class 2 Easy, well-defined trail with a firm surface. May include gentle hill sections and occasional steps. Suitable for all levels of experience and fitness but may present difficulties for people with mobility impairments.



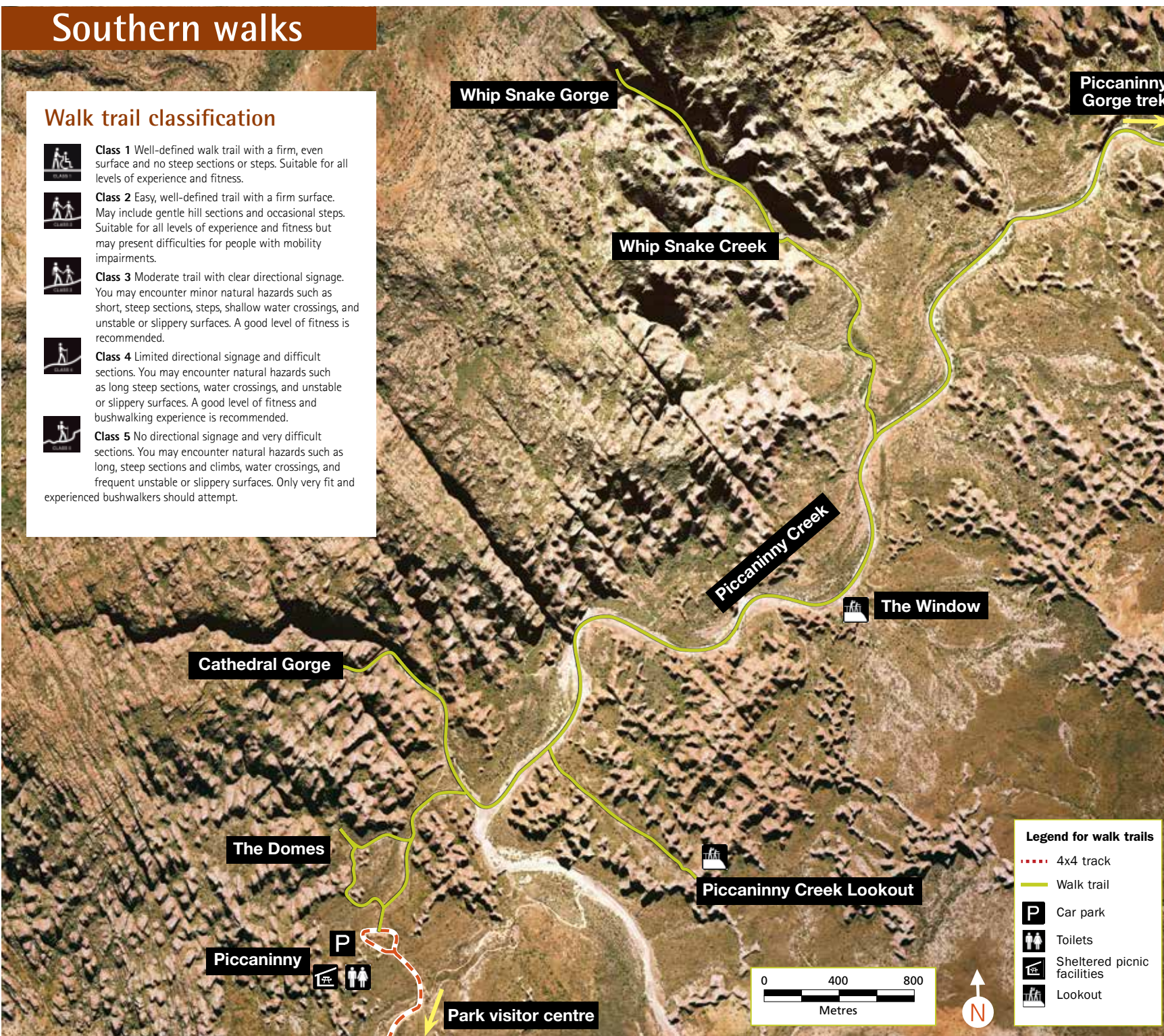
Class 3 Moderate trail with clear directional signage. You may encounter minor natural hazards such as short, steep sections, steps, shallow water crossings, and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness is recommended.



Class 4 Limited directional signage and difficult sections. You may encounter natural hazards such as long steep sections, water crossings, and unstable or slippery surfaces. A good level of fitness and bushwalking experience is recommended.



Class 5 No directional signage and very difficult sections. You may encounter natural hazards such as long, steep sections and climbs, water crossings, and frequent unstable or slippery surfaces. Only very fit and experienced bushwalkers should attempt.



Southern walks

The Domes Class 3

This is an easy 700m loop walk winding around banded domes towering majestically around you. Allow 30 minutes.



Cathedral Gorge Class 4

This is a moderate 2km return walk with short steep slopes and narrow ledges. Allow more than one hour walking through banded domes, pebbles and potholes, towering cliffs and honeycomb rocks that lead to an amphitheatre.



Piccaninny Creek Lookout Class 3

This 2.8km return trail provides views across Piccaninny Creek as it winds south through spinifex hummocks towards the Ord River. Allow more than one hour.



Piccaninny Gorge trek Class 5

This one to two-night trek is into a remote and magnificent gorge. The first 7km are relatively difficult. It then becomes even more difficult because walkers have to negotiate fallen boulders and loose rocks.



This is an unmarked route with no facilities or directional signage. Walkers must be prepared and take adequate food, water and clothing. There is no reliable drinking water in the gorge.

Hikers must register at the visitors centre and a satellite phone or Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) must be carried at all times. PLB are available for hire for \$30, with a \$250 deposit refundable when returned.

The Window Class 4

It is a 6km return walk to The Window. Here, a natural hole in the sandstone structure provides another interesting feature of the Bungle Bungle Range.



Whip Snake Gorge Class 4

This is a 10km return trail over uneven surfaces of soil, sand and rock. It leads into Whip Snake Gorge, ending at a small permanent pool. The shaded amphitheatre supports rock figs, Brittle Range gum, ferns and mosses. Allow four hours.



Trail classifications

Ensure you check any individual trailhead signs at the start of trails for specific information.

